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"Glad sights are common: Nature draws
Her random pictures through the year,
But oft her music bids us long
Remember those most dear."

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN,
"Seeking the Mayflower."

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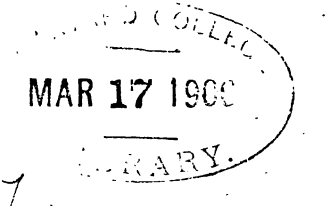

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PREFACE

THE editor's aim in this compilation has been to select, from the works of representative American poets, certain pictures of nature, either vignettes of specific objects or broad landscape effects.

There has been a hope that the book might aid in nature study and might foster æsthetic observation and culture. The selections are all taken from authors of high literary rank, with the desire to promote among the younger students a further acquaintance with contemporaneous poets, and, at the same time, to recall familiarly certain classic American poems of description and narration.

Doubtless the selections disclose sins of commission and of omission. The editor deeply regrets the absence of poems by Sidney Lanier, since satisfactory arrangements could not be made with his publishers. In the introduction, however, tribute has been paid to the poet's sensitive and melodious nature pictures.

The work of preparation has been fraught with pleasure and encouragement. Specific acknowledgment of permission to reprint poems is made in the list of Authors and Titles of Poems. Special gratitude, however, would be expressed for the generous courtesy

of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Copeland & Day, Little, Brown & Co., Harper & Brothers, The Century Co., G. P. Putnam's Sons, Small, Maynard & Co., Dodd, Mead & Co., The Macmillan Co., and for the kindly interest and favors shown by Mr. Stedman, Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Gilder, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Mifflin, Mr. Scollard, Mr. Cheney, Mr. Carman, Mr. Traubel, General Piatt, Mrs. Deland, Mrs. Sangster, Mrs. Moulton, Miss Guiney, and Miss Reese.

WORCESTER, MASS.,
June 26, 1899.

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INTRODUCTION

In tracing early American life and letters, one notes the gradual yet radical change of attitude toward scenery and all phases of nature-observation. To the early colonists, seeking for tillage and shelter, the varied landscape brought only fear or indifference. The sentiment of awe, mingled with trite and colorless adjectives, characterized nearly all colonial prose and verse. Josselyn's familiar description, in 1675, of the White Mountains as "daunting terrible," was no more unsympathetic than the stanzas of Mistress Anne Bradstreet and other seventeenth-century poets. With the exception of a natural couplet on bird-nesting, her nature-tributes in "The Four Seasons" are forced and crude.

With the slow emergence from physical discomforts and severe tastes, came an interest in local nature-life. The earlier lyrics of Philip Freneau contain some natural and delicate tributes. "The Dying Elm" and "On the Sleep of Plants" show a poet-philosopher's mind. Still more pictorial are the stanzas, in the Monmouth edition of 1795, "The Wild Honeysuckle" and "May to April." Though the former poem is more often quoted, the latter has embryo melody and fancy: —

"Without your showers, I breed no flowers,
Each field a barren waste appears;
If you don't weep, my blossoms sleep,
They take such pleasure in your tears.

"O'er April dead, my shades I spread;
To her I owe my dress so gay—
Of daughters three, it falls on me
To close our triumphs in one day.

"Thus to repose, all Nature goes;
Month after month must find its doom:
Time on the wing, May ends the Spring,
And Summer dances o'er her tomb!"

Some early writers defended nature-beauties on the ground of their utility. Such efforts echoed the long struggle for physical comforts in a rough, untilled country. In 1705, Robert Beverly, in his "History of Virginia," apologized: "Hills are not without their advantages" since they afforded "streams where the finest water-works in the world may be made at a very small expense." In somewhat similar trend, with emphasis of beauty and utility mingled, are passages in Timothy Dwight's "Greenfield Hill," published in 1794:—

"Springs bubbling round the year,
Gay-wand'ring brooks, wells at the surface full,
Yield life, and health, and joy to every house,
And every vivid field. Rivers, with foamy course,
Pour o'er the ragged cliff the white cascade,
And roll unnumber'd mills; or, like the Nile,
Fatten the beauteous interval; or bear
The sails of commerce through the laughing groves."

The crude and didactic stanzas of Dwight, Brainard, Percival, and Wilde have been forgotten by readers of to-day, yet they marked milestones from fear and neglect to love of field-beauties and worship of the mountains. "Spring" has been the shibboleth of nearly all poets from Virgil and Ossian to verse-makers of this

current year; allowing for the trite theme, there was melody and grace in the early lines on "Spring" by Percival: —

> "The woods are ready to bud and bloom
> And are wearing for Summer their quiet gloom;
> The tufted brook reflects, as it flows,
> The tips of the half-unopened rose,
> And the early bird, as he carols free,
> Sings to his little love and thee."

The statement has often been made that nowhere in America can be found more varied, inspiring scenery than in western Massachusetts. This uplifting landscape gave incentive to America's first nature-poet; Bryant never lost his love for the hills and meads near his Cummington home. Like the earliest representative artists, he was a landscape painter in words, delighting in broad, scenic effects. The elements in general — "Earth and her waters, and the depths of air" — gave fontal inspiration. This wide range of thought and scene afforded majesty to "Thanatopsis," the poem brought by his proud father to the manager of the *North American Review* in 1817. It seemed incredible that such deep, rich lines could have been written by a young man just leaving boyhood. His life in a country village had given scant opportunities for education and experience, but it had developed, through the grand influences of nature, a young poet destined to bring world-wide fame to American literature. From his earliest rhymes to his latest poems one notes his reverence and deep gratitude for the large gifts of nature's God: —

> "Thou dost look
> On thy creation and pronounce it good.

> Its valleys, glorious in their summer green,
> Praise thee in silent beauty, and its woods,
> Swept by the murmuring winds of ocean, join
> The murmuring shores in a perpetual hymn."

While Bryant showed the influence of Cowper and Wordsworth in his interpretations of nature, yet he mirrored the distinctive atmosphere of New England, mental and religious as well as physical. It is fitting imagery that calls him the "Druid" of our literature. From the generic "Forest Hymn" to the idyllic "Planting of the Apple Tree" one moves amid shaded paths. "Among the Trees" recalls the visit to Cedarmere, recorded by Donald G. Mitchell in his recent rambles in "American Lands and Letters," and his emphasis of Bryant's minute attention to the care and grafting of his trees.

While Bryant delighted in broad vistas of "forests, stars, and seas," he was never unmindful of the small, concrete objects in nature and in life. The yellow violet, the fringed gentian, the water-fowl, even the mosquito, moved him both to close observation and to meditative flights. The sea is no more beautiful to him than the little rill which, —

> "Oft to its warbling waters drew
> My little feet when life was new."

Bryant was a man of great thrift and practical knowledge, as his business success testified. The far-sighted provident poet found delight in watching the habits of "Robert of Lincoln" whom he honored by a most sympathetic lyric.

In general, Bryant is remembered by his lofty meditations rather than his lighter songs of birds and

flowers, yet one may seek long for a more blithesome melody than "The Gladness of Nature." If he was somewhat restricted and constrained in themes and forms, yet each passing decade pays added respect to his creative and controlled imagination. Lacking great passion, he veiled much tenderness behind a seeming coldness of mien and poetry. Within such poems as "Summer Wind" and "The Death of the Flowers" are glimpses of that deep humanity so well expressed in Mr. Gilder's elegy on Bryant:—

> "He is gone, and we who thought him cold
> Miss from our lives a generous heat,
> And know that stolid form did hold
> A fire that burned, a heart that beat."

Associated in close memory with Bryant as contemplative poets of nature are Emerson and Whittier. Emerson always studied life with acute and minute observation. Bryant *saw* forms of nature and humanity with the eye of a reflective poet; Emerson *observed* with the mind of a philosopher and with the hopefulness of a loving seer. He found much to mystify and question in life and nature, yet he was ever "the singing soul" of both. Critics trace resemblances in Emerson to Greek and Hebrew models, they compare him to Wordsworth and Shelley, yet his work bears evidence of strong home-incentive. Concord and Walden are reproduced by Emerson with a minuteness worthy of Thoreau. It was in New England woods that the poet found and immortalized "The Rhodora," and amid home-fields that he followed "the burly, dozing, humble-bee." Mr. Chapman, in the essays that often rouse our combativeness as well as appreciation, thus com-

ments on Emerson's local tributes: "His worship of the New England landscape amounts to a religion. His poems do that wonderful thing, make us feel that we are alone in the fields and with the trees, — not English fields nor French lanes, but New England meadows and uplands."

To Emerson's mind, strong with transcendental insight, all nature was alive with soul, and everything in the physical world moved with perfect and soul-satisfying harmony. There is beauty of deep thought as well as matchless grace in the lines from "May-Day": —

> "The world rolls round — mistrust it not,
> Befalls again what once befell;
> All things return, both sphere and mote,
> And I shall hear my bluebird's note,
> And dream the dream of Auburn dell."

The snow-storm has furnished theme for all the older New England poets, including Bryant, who so seldom is classified by his birthplace. Whittier used the snow as theme for a rarely equalled domestic idyl in "Snow-Bound"; Lowell commemorated "The First Snow-Fall" by a descriptive elegy of beautiful tenderness; Bryant wrote a reflective poem on "The Snow-Shower"; Longfellow composed a dainty lyric upon "Snow-Flakes"; and Emerson created a classic picture-poem in "The Snow-Storm." Whether portraying summer showers or chickadees, there is always resident in Emerson's poems a vibrant stimulus and hope, a symbolic summer: —

> "Over the winter glaciers
> I see the summer glow
> And through the wild-piled snowdrifts
> The warm rose-buds below."

Many forms of nature-poetry are exampled in the New England poets. Lowell had the tastes of a pastoral poet; Whittier was the bucolic, and Longfellow was "the singer of the sea." Lowell revealed a frank, unquestioning pleasure in outdoor life; he rejoiced in the bobolink and the dandelion: —

> "Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
> Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
> First pledge of blithesome May."

With the same simple, childlike pleasure, coupled with an artist's expression, he describes the roistering waves at Appledore. He invites his readers to saunter with him along "The Foot-Path Way" or "Under the Willows," while his tendency to "point a moral" sometimes creeps into his most natural and direct descriptions. This trait of Lowell, which mars the artistic perfection of many poems, was recognized by himself in his couplet in "A Fable for Critics": —

> "The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching,
> Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching."

His later poems often recall the same boyish associations that incited one of his earliest efforts, "Our Old Horse-Chestnut Tree."

In later days, critics have been severe upon Longfellow's so-called "studied effects," his strained and sometimes artificial stanzas. Undoubtedly, his mature work was greatly influenced by his careful study and imitation of metrical forms. His lasting popularity, however, is his best defence from the charge of mere artifice. Longfellow's poems, with all their matchless grace, would have been rejected long ago unless they

had revealed genuine heart and vital truth. The most worthy, as well as the most familiar, of his poems are not the ambitious "Birds of Passage," nor yet the bookish, refined translations and sonnets, but the legends, songs of home and child-life, and the nature-poems. Excepting a few poems, like "Sunrise on the Hills," and "Woods in Winter," one turns to Longfellow for views of sea and shore. The boy in his Portland home early caught the spirit of the "serried billows" and

> "the sound of the trampling surf
> On the rocks and the hard sea-sand."

A fervor rings out in vigorous music from the picture-ballads and odes: —

> "Till my soul is full of longing
> For the secret of the sea,
> And the heart of the great ocean
> Sends a thrilling pulse through me."

A bucolic poet must be one of the people whose natal traits he can portray from personal contact, not from scientific study. Burns and Whittier stand side by side as lyrists of country life. Recognized as the true poet of New England's past, Whittier had a deeper love for rustic life than any other poet of such fine mental tone. "Snow-Bound" and the "Barefoot Boy" verify his own words: "The mere dilettante and the amateur ruralist may as well keep their hands off. The prize is not for them. He who would successfully strive for it must be himself what he sings, — part and parcel of the rural life." The chance volume of Burns gave to the farmer-boy the first suggestion of the poetry of his life: —

"Rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees."

Modern life is far away from the leisurely days of "Telling the Bees," yet the charm of such pictures is unfading. In Whittier's poems, nature, as a background, is as unadorned as his interior views. As example of the vivid, yet untouched, photography are the familiar lines from "The Huskers":—

"And lo! as through the western pines, on meadow, stream, and pond,
Flamed the red radiance of the sky set all afire beyond,
Slowly o'er the eastern sea-bluffs a milder glory shone,
And the sunset and the moonrise were mingled into one."

For Bryant's meditative religion Whittier substituted a childlike, undaunted faith; without the philosophic observation of Emerson or the finished melody of Longfellow, he surpassed all in purity and sympathy with nature's moods. The poet of country life and the poet of freedom combined in Whittier to bring a wider fame than either trait alone would have procured. Without lessening his service as patriot-poet, his more lasting influence has been as revealer of the beauty and health of rustic life, and as an example of sturdy manliness and piety.

Many poets show study of Whittier's narratives and songs. The more meritorious bucolics of Piatt, Joaquin Miller, and James Whitcomb Riley suggest Whittier's ballads and "Songs of Labor."

While Emerson and Whittier were reflecting New England in poems, Bayard Taylor, with broad sympathies, was writing his "Poems of Home and Travel." Among these none surpass the "Pennsylvania Ballads,"

memories of early home life. Lacking the vigor and color of later poems of the Orient, they are buoyant and faithful in tone. In the volume "Home Pastorals" are some melodious nature-pictures in hexameter, notably the lethargic description of August:—

"Dead is the air and still! the leaves of the locust and walnut
Lazily hang from the boughs, inlaying their intricate outlines
Rather on space than the sky,—on a tideless expansion of slumber.
Faintly, afar in the depths of the duskily withering grasses,
Katydids chirp, and I hear the monotonous rattle of crickets."

Few American poets have gained recognition more slowly than Whitman and Sidney Lanier, and few are receiving more current attention. They present marked contrasts in personality and method. In truth, Whitman's rough metrical form called forth extreme censure from the delicate melodist, Lanier. Both poets, however, were deeply imbued with nature-worship and her religion. Though at wide range they seem incomparable as nature-poets, yet Mr. Stedman, in "Nature and Elements of Poetry," has well emphasized their similar aims; "but it is manifest that the two (as near and as different as Valentine and Orson) were moving in the same direction; that is, for an escape from conventional trammels to something free, from hackneyed time-beats to an assimilation of nature's larger rhythm,—to limitless harmonies suggested by the voices of her winds and the diapason of her ocean billows." Both poets portrayed the unique, the overlooked yet distinctly American features; both expressed the nation's need for virile, outdoor life. Recall Whitman's potent message: "I conceive of no heroic elements of Democracy in the United States, or of Democracy maintaining itself at

all, without the nature-element forming a main part— to be its health element and its beauty element — to really underlie the whole politics, sanity, religion, and art of the New World."

Whitman, like Bryant, saw nature in her broader aspects; ocean, forest, and the whole universe are themes for his most typical verse. To him, however, the soul and humanity were far more important than any scientific regard for nature. He exclaimed: —

"Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams still dazzling,"

yet within the same poem he regrets selfish delight in nature and, with broad sympathy for mankind, declares: —

"Give me comrades and lovers by the thousand!
O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied!"

Though Whitman has been called a pupil of Emerson, his frank, sturdy celebration of all elements of decay as well as beauty in nature's processes was a cause of misunderstanding between the two poets, who found much to revere in each other. Whitman's catalogues of concrete objects, that form such a sharply outlined picture, his very massiveness and rudeness, are part of his own elemental and unrefined nature. His mission, revealed to himself, was "to celebrate" the generic and uncelebrated in nature and life, in woods and in streets. Among many passages of interpretation that we owe to Mr. Burroughs in his study of Whitman, none are more cogent and suggestive than the terse sentences: "He sees things in mass. He sees the fundamental and necessary things. His vision is sweeping and final. He tries himself by the orbs. His standards of poetry and

art are astronomic." When Whitman chooses for his title "Leaves of Grass" or "Warble for Lilac-Time," these specific objects only lead the procession of elements, orbic, human, and spiritual, that are interwoven in his poems. The broad, sympathetic nature of Whitman, that sought to express through himself the emotions and experiences of all types of men and women, found expression in his nature-poetry. He is poet of all sections and of all scenery. He could portray with equal fidelity and delight the cañons of Dakota or the lights and shadows, "the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet," in crossing Brooklyn ferry. He extolled the wild sea-flights of "The Man-of-War Bird": —

"Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With reappearing day as now so happy and serene."

He painted the prairies at sunset in brilliant colors: —

"Shot gold, maroon, and violet, dazzling silver, emerald, fawn,
The light, the general air possessed by them — colors till now unknown."

With a few exceptions, Whitman in his nature-poems avoids the more delicate forms of flowers and trees. The lilac is used not alone to usher in the revery already mentioned, but also as symbol of serene love in the immortal threnody on Lincoln: —

"Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim."

To this tender treatment of nature belong those plaintive bird-interludes in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." In imaginative beauty it would be

difficult to equal this nocturne of the mocking-bird, calling and moaning for its mate: —

> "Loud! loud! loud!
> Loud I call to you, my love!
> High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
> Surely you must know who is here, is here,
> You must know who I am, my love."

Such occasional melodies of song are surprises to the casual reader of Whitman. They represent one side of his composite nature, the tenderness shown as well in "Drum-Taps" and his poems on old age and comradeship. In contrast with such gentle fancies are the nature-poems characteristic of his sturdy, struggling manhood, — the rugged, wild waves in "Patroling Barnegat," "Proud Music of the Storm," and the vivid pictorial lines beginning: —

> "With husky-haughty lips, O sea!
> Where day and night I wend thy surf-beat shore,
> Imaging to my sense thy varied strange suggestions.
> * * * * * * *
> Thy troops of white-maned racers racing to the goal,
> Thy ample, smiling face, dash'd with the sparkling dimples of the sun,
> Thy brooding scowl and murk — thy unloos'd hurricanes,
> Thy unsubduedness, caprices, wilfulness."

In sharp contrast with Whitman's bold delight in the large, restless forces of nature, and his direct and often rough portrayal, is the spiritual, intimate love of Lanier for all delicate beauties and his sensitive melodies of soul and ear. He not only personified corn and trees, but he claimed cousinship with cloud and clover; in "Sunrise" he sings in lover-like tribute: —

> "Ye lispers, whisperers, singers in storms,
> Ye consciences murmuring faiths under forms,
> Ye ministers meet for each passion that grieves
> Friendly, sisterly, sweetheart leaves."

Whitman's nature-poems have wide range of scenery, but Lanier, because of sad, unfulfilled years, seems restricted to a few local streams and sounds. The glory and glooms of the marshes, —

> "A message of range and of sweep,"

the marvellous melody in "Song of the Chattahoochee," "Tampa Robins," and the "Southern Mocking-bird" were his chosen themes. In "Tampa Robins" the tone is blithe and defiant, incarnation of happy bird-notes: —

> "I'll south with the sun, and keep my clime;
> My wing is king of the summer-time."

Lanier's frequent home-sickness, during his futile journeys for health, extended even to the scenery; in "From the Flats" is a pathetic lament: —

> "Oh might I through these tears
> But glimpse some hill my Georgia high uprears."

Few nature-poets have shown more trustful reverence for God and nature. Suggesting Whittier in his perfect faith for the future, the constant struggle against illness and poverty caused frequent appeals from a cold world to the religion and harmony of nature, notably in "The Symphony." In the familiar "Ballad of Trees and the Master" the poet gave an artistic and unique vision of the comforting messages of the trees to the suffering Christ.

Associated with the name of Lanier are the other southern poets, Henry Timrod, and Paul Hamilton Hayne. The new edition of Timrod's poems, just issued as a memorial volume, reveals the delicate poetic impulse of this man who left the world almost with the first notes of his poetry. How magic is the fancy of such lines as these:—

> "Out in the lonely woods the jasmine burns
> Its fragrant lamps, and turns
> Into a royal court with green festoons
> The banks of dark lagoons."

Hayne was essentially "the singer of the pines." He lacked the musical concerts of Lanier and the strong fancy of Timrod, yet his romantic narratives possess the imagination and melody of the troubadour. There is a tender fancy in the ode, "Our Humming Bird":—

> "She seems a creature born with wings,
> O'er which a rainbow spirit flings
> Fair hues of softly shining flame;
> Light is she as the changeful air,
> Borne on gay humors everywhere,
> Bewitchingly."

The distinctive nature-poet is seldom found in current literature. His message and mission have been assimilated in the many themes offered by the modern poet to this restive age. Nature, in her varied texture and color, has become "the poet's perfect Cloth of Gold." Her changes and glories at every season furnish living background for diverse pictures of modern life. Keats said with force, "The poetry of earth is never dead."

Without classifying contemporaneous American poets

as distinctive nature-versifiers, one finds in recent poetry many delicate and sympathetic odes on field-life and bird-song. Our later poets, in dealing with nature, substitute the pictorial and symbolic effects for the reflective trend of Bryant and Emerson. A list of our nature-poems would necessitate far more space than that granted this editor. In poetry, as in fiction, our authors are portraying many sections of this vast country, so divergent in landscapes and in products. There are ballads and burlesques of life in rough frontier environment, with background of cañons and sierras. Joaquin Miller's bucolics and adventurous poems contain a few strong, picturesque nature-vistas; witness this extract from "Californian":—

"Afar the bright Sierras lie
A swaying line of snowy white,
A fringe of heaven hung in sight
Against the blue base of the sky.

* * * * *

"I stand upon a stony rim,
Stone-paved and pattern'd as a street;
A rock-lipp'd cañon plunging south,
As if it were earth's open'd mouth,

* * * * * *

"Brown hawks are wheeling here and there,
And up and down the broken wall
Cling clumps of dark green chaparral,
While from the rent rocks, gray and bare,
Blue junipers hang in the air."

American verse abounds in miniature paintings of sky and flower as well as in lofty hymns of nature-worship. Our honored poet-critics, Stedman and Stoddard, have shown the artistic touch and conscience of

nature-lovers in varied stanzas of fancy, reflection, and allegory. Mr. Stoddard's reverent love for sea and clouds found expression in "Hymn to the Sea," and in that majestic panorama of nature, "Carmen Naturae Triumphale."

The masterly skill of Mr. Gilder has received its merited praise here and abroad, and his nature-poetry is always rich in color and sentiment.

The tribute paid by Hawthorne to some of Mr. Aldrich's earlier poems, that "they seemed too delicate to be breathed upon," is recalled by such pastels of nature as "Before the Rain," "Tiger Lilies," and "The Bluebells of New England." With self-revelation he writes in his later poem, "A Touch of Nature": —

> "When first the crocus thrusts its point of gold,
> Up through the still snow-drifted garden-mould,
> And folded green things in dim woods unclose
> Their crinkled spears, a sudden tremor goes
> Into my veins and makes me kith and kin
> To every wild-born thing that thrills and blows."

Dr. Henry Van Dyke has shown a true poetic impulse, mingled with warm nature-communion, in his stanzas on the changes of seasons and music of the birds. A sympathetic bird-lover expresses admiration for nightingale, laverock, blackbird, thrush, but longs to hear a simpler strain, — the

> "Wood-notes of the veery."

It would be difficult to equal in verse the melody and happy conceit of "The Maryland Yellow-Throat": —

> "A living sunbeam, tipped with wings;
> A spark of light that shines and sings
> *Witchery — witchery — witchery.*"

Many poems of nature have been written by authors whose special rank has been as novelists or essayists. George William Curtis, Colonel Higginson, John Burroughs, Mr. Howells, Mr. Woodberry, Dr. Mitchell, — to mention no further, — have written occasional verses of delicate nature-tribute. In study of Mr. Howell's sturdy realism in fiction, we sometimes forget that he wrote those tender poems, "Pleasure — Pain" and "A Springtime," with blithe promise: —

> "One knows the spring is coming:
> There are birds; the fields are green;
> There is balm in the sunlight and moonlight,
> And dew in the twilights between."

There is a mystic charm in the poetic reveries of Edward Rowland Sill, Philip Savage, Bliss Carman, and Richard Hovey. Father Tabb, acknowledging his debt to his friend Lanier, possesses a more uniform and less rapturous lyrical skill than his loved master displayed. American poetry has been greatly enriched by the nature-pictures, in sonnet form, by Lloyd Mifflin, whose soul vibrates to the music of nature's calm and storm.

The poems by American women, from the sentimental strains by Mrs. Whitman and the Cary sisters to the delicate impulses of Miss Guiney and Miss Reese, contain scores of nature-lyrics. Celia Thaxter's "sprayey stanzas," Miss Coolbrith's vistas of Pacific slopes, the varied and sympathetic tributes by Edith Thomas, Mrs. Moulton, Ella Higginson, the strange soul-revelations by Emily Dickinson, — all merit passing notice.

No thoughtful reader will deny that we have present

need of poetry, and, above all, nature-poetry, in this age of restless, nervous effort. We may well recall the message of Matthew Arnold, the lesson in "Nature's Work," a message and lesson recognized by many American teachers in life and literature:—

"One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—

"Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity!
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

"Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy quiet ministers move on,

"Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil;
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone."

Nature-poetry has a special mission, also, in this era of scientific nature-study. Already Mr. Burroughs, who can speak with the voice of an oracle, has sounded a note of warning: "We approach nature in an exact, calculating, tabulating, mercantile spirit. We make an inventory of her storehouse. Our relations with her take on the air of business, not of love and friendship. . . . If nature is to be a resource in a man's life, one's relation to her must not be too exact and formal, but more that of a lover and friend." Against this danger of too formal nature-science the poet stands as safe-

guard. He is the loving interpreter of sky and meadow, he is the artist who paints many varieties, and cultivates our tastes as well as our observation. Against too close nature-dissection, he offers to guide us into nature-communion.

The fact has often been noted that the most representative poets of American scenery have also been poets of patriotism. Bryant and Emerson, Whittier and Whitman, sounded battle-hymns and "Drum-Taps" with the same fervor that they celebrated peace and refreshment in native woods and waters. They sought the essence of truth, "the open secret," in humanity as well as in nature. Mingled with delight in local beauties and grandeur, in the best poets reside broad, vital sympathies with life in all forms and expressions. With Whitman they exclaim: —

> "The soul,
> Forever and forever — longer than soil is brown and solid —
> Longer than water ebbs and flows."

America has produced no poet worthy to stand beside the great masters of England's past, in whose glory we rejoice as common heritage. Deficient in the higher ranges of the epic and the dramatic, our poetry is rich in pastorals, bucolics, idyls, and lyrics. Our elder poets, whom Time has classified, and the younger, whom the future will shift, have immortalized many varieties of landscape, birds, and blossoms. From their work those poems will survive that are spontaneous and faithful, that portray, in direct form or suggested incident, salient features of nature which appeal to the deep, noble sentiments of humanity.

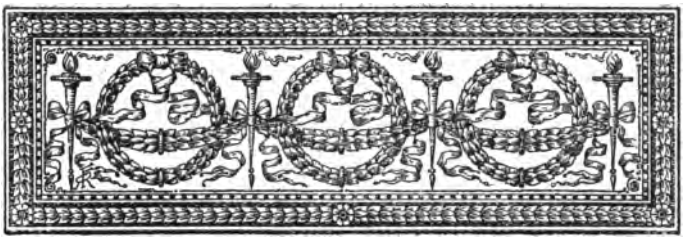
Whether dealing with broad elemental range or with concrete aspects, the poet must be in perfect harmony with the moods and workings of nature. Such vital, responsive spirit has given charm and uplift to Wordsworth, Arnold, Tennyson, Bryant, Whittier, Lowell, and Aldrich. To the diverse melodies of the true nature-lovers are applicable Emerson's precept, "Whatever language the poet uses, the secret of tone is at the heart of the poem."

I

LANDSCAPE VISTAS

Unspeakable high processions of sun and moon and
countless stars above,
Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, moun-
tains, trees,
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic inten-
tion,
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.

WALT WHITMAN:
"O Vast Rondure."



Before Sunrise in Winter

A PURPLE cloud hangs half-way down;
  Sky, yellow gold below;
The naked trees, beyond the town,
  Like masts against it show —

Bare masts and spars of our earth-ship,
  With shining snow-sails furled;
And through the sea of space we slip,
  That flows all round the world.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL.

Sunrise on the Hills

I STOOD upon the hills, when heaven's wide arch
Was glorious with the sun's returning march,
And woods were brightened, and soft gales
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales.
The clouds were far beneath me; — bathed in light,
They gathered mid-way round the wooded height,
And, in their fading glory, shone
Like hosts in battle overthrown,
As many a pinnacle, with shifting glance,
Through the gray mist thrust up its shattered lance,
And rocking on the cliff was left
The dark pine blasted, bare, and cleft.
The veil of cloud was lifted, and below
Glowed the rich valley, and the river's flow
Was darkened by the forest's shade,
Or glistened in the white cascade;
Where upward, in the mellow blush of day,
The noisy bittern wheeled his spiral way.

I heard the distant waters dash,
I saw the current whirl and flash, —
And richly, by the blue lake's silver beach,
The woods were bending with a silent reach.
Then, o'er the vale, with gentle swell,
The music of the village bell
Came sweetly to the echo-giving hills;
And the wild horn, whose voice the woodland fills,

Was ringing to the merry shout,
That faint and far the glen sent out,
Where, answering to the sudden shot, thin smoke,
Through thick-leaved branches, from the dingle broke.

If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows, that thou wouldst forget,
If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

Sunrise on the Marsh

DEEP down the sky, as yet Day sleeps serene;
She does not stir, she lies as in a swoon.
Silent the marshes, save at times, the croon
Of some lone heron in the swamp's dark green.
The lyric fingers of the wind, unseen,
Play on the lute-strings of the reeds — a tune
To be remembered! All the glassed lagoon
Is hushed as in the desert's void demesne;
When, under the horizon far, I hear
The clarions of the dawn — how faint up-borne!
And low above the dying twilight's bier
A few faint-flushed and feathery clouds appear;
Then — o'er the far savanna's utmost bourn —
Flare the wide wings of the flamingo morn!

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

Mogg Megone

(An Excerpt from Part II)

'Tis morning over Norridgewock —
On tree and wigwam, wave and rock.
Bathed in the autumnal sunshine, stirred
At intervals by breeze and bird,
And wearing all the hues which glow
In heaven's own pure and perfect bow,
That glorious picture of the air,
Which summer's light-robed angel forms
On the dark ground of fading storms,
With pencil dipped in sunbeams there —
And, stretching out, on either hand,
O'er all that wide and unshorn land,
Till, weary of its gorgeousness,
The aching and the dazzled eye
Rests gladdened, on the calm blue sky —
Slumbers the mighty wilderness!
The oak, upon the windy hill,
Its dark green burthen upward heaves —
The hemlock broods above its rill,
Its cone-like foliage darker still,
While the white birch's graceful stem
And the rough walnut bough receives
The sun upon their crowded leaves,
Each colored like a topaz gem;
And the tall maple wears with them
The coronal which autumn gives,
The brief, bright sign of ruin near,
The hectic of a dying year!

John G. Whittier.

Pæan of the Hills

(An Excerpt)

The Lord's eternal altars are the hills!
And now that golden-hearted summer reigns,
They rise above the billowy leagues of plains
Fresh with the quickening dew that dawn distils.
  Each year, rejuvenate,
From winter's icy thraldom forth they spring
To hear the northward-winging robins sing,
The bourgeoning forests prate
Their leafy loves, and the sweet murmuring
  Of brooklets flowing free
To pay their tribute to the restless sea.

* * * * * *

At restful twilight hour,
When, just above the bright horizon's rim,
Sweet Hesper glistens, tremulous and dim,
From every leaf and flower,
From every blade of grass the night wind thrills,
  A mystic voice is heard,
The universal Spirit of the hills;
  List its prophetic word,
  Speaking in tones sublime
Of past, of present, and of future time!

I am the spirit of the hallowed hills!
  An airy house I hold
Where twin moss-bordered intermingling rills
  Flash back the Sun-god's gold.

I am more glad and free
Than any entity
That draws a mortal breath,
Or fears to answer at the gates of death.

Mine are possessions rare,
Domains of lucent air,
Rich perfumes redolent,
Charmed from the Orient;
The whorlèd flowers, the trees,
Those bacchanals, the bees,
The notes of chirming birds,
The lowing of sleek herds;
Sunlight, moonlight are mine,
And the cloud's crystal wine!

* * * * *

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

The Strength of the Hills

My thoughts go home to that old brown house
With its low roof sloping down to the east,
And its garden fragrant with roses and thyme
That blossom no longer except in rhyme,
Where the honey-bees used to feast.

Afar in the west the great hills rose,
Silent and steadfast and gloomy and gray:
I thought they were giants, and doomed to keep
Their watch while the world should wake or sleep,
Till the trumpet should sound on the judgment day.

I used to wonder of what they dreamed
As they brooded there in their silent might,
While March winds smote them, or June rains fell,
Or the snows of winter their ghostly spell
Wrought in the long and lonesome night.

They remembered a younger world than ours,
Before the trees on their top were born,
When the old brown house was itself a tree,
And waste were the fields where now you see
The winds astir in the tasselled corn.

And I was as young as the hills were old,
And the world was warm with the breath of spring,
And the roses red and the lilies white
Budded and bloomed for my heart's delight,
And the birds in my heart began to sing.

But calm in the distance the great hills rose,
  Deaf unto rapture and dumb unto pain,
Since they knew that Joy is the mother of Grief,
And remembered a butterfly's life is brief,
  And the sun sets only to rise again.

They will brood and dream and be silent as now,
  When the youngest children alive to-day
Have grown to be women and men, — grown old,
And gone from the world like a tale that is told,
  And even whose echo forgets to stay.

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

The Firmament

(In earlier editions this poem was entitled "The Skies.")

Ay! gloriously thou standest there,
  Beautiful, boundless firmament!
That, swelling wide o'er earth and air,
  And round the horizon bent,
With thy bright vault, and sapphire wall,
Dost overhang and circle all.

Far, far below thee, tall old trees
  Arise, and piles built up of old,
And hills, whose ancient summits freeze
  In the fierce light and cold.
The eagle soars his utmost height,
Yet far thou stretchest o'er his flight.

Thou hast thy frowns — with thee on high
  The storm has made his airy seat,
Beyond that soft blue curtain lie
  His stores of hail and sleet.
Thence the consuming lightnings break,
There the strong hurricanes awake.

Yet art thou prodigal of smiles —
  Smiles, sweeter than thy frowns are stern:
Earth sends, from all her thousand isles,
  A shout at thy return.
The glory that comes down from thee,
Bathes, in deep joy, the land and sea.

The sun, the gorgeous sun is thine,
  The pomp that brings and shuts the day,
The clouds that round him change and shine,
  The airs that fan his way.
Thence look the thoughtful stars, and there
The meek moon walks the silent air.

The sunny Italy may boast
  The beauteous tints that flush her skies,
And lovely, round the Grecian coast,
  May thy blue pillars rise.
I only know how fair they stand
Around my own beloved land.

And they are fair — a charm is theirs,
  That earth, the proud green earth, has not,
With all the forms, and hues, and airs,
  That haunt her sweetest spot.
We gaze upon thy calm, pure sphere,
And read of Heaven's eternal year.

Oh, when, amid the throng of men,
  The heart grows sick of hollow mirth,
How willingly we turn us then
  Away from this cold earth,
And look into thy azure breast,
For seats of innocence and rest!

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

The Prairies

(An Excerpt)

These are the gardens of the Desert, these
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
For which the speech of England has no name —
The Prairies. I behold them for the first,
And my heart swells, while the dilated sight
Takes in the encircling vastness. Lo! they stretch
In airy undulations, far away,
As if the ocean, in his gentlest swell,
Stood still, with all his rounded billows fixed,
And motionless forever. — Motionless? —
No — they are all unchained again. The clouds
Sweep over with their shadows, and, beneath,
The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye;
Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
The sunny ridges. Breezes of the South!
Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie-hawk that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not — ye have played
Among the palms of Mexico and vines
Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks
That from the fountains of Sonora glide
Into the calm Pacific — have ye fanned
A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?
Man hath no part in all this glorious work:
The hand that built the firmament hath heaved
And smoothed these verdant swells, and sown their slopes
With herbage, planted them with island groves,

And hedged them round with forests. Fitting floor
For this magnificent temple of the sky —
With flowers whose glory and whose multitude
Rival the constellations! The great heavens
Seem to stoop down upon the scene in love, —
A nearer vault, and of a tenderer blue,
Than that which bends above the eastern hills.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

In the Grand Cañon

THE stronghold these of those strange, mighty gods
Who walked the earth before man's feeble race,
And, passing hence to their unknown abodes
In farther worlds, left here their awful trace.
Turrets, and battlements, and toppling towers,
That spurn the torrent foaming at their base,
And pierce the clouds, uplifting into space.
No sound is here, save where the river pours
Its ice-born flood, or when the tempests sweep
In rush of battle, and the lightnings leap
In thunder to the cliffs; no wing outspread
Above these walls, lone and untenanted
By man or beast, — but where the eagle soars
Above the crags, — and by the gates they guard,
Huge, and as motionless, on either hand,
The rock-hewn sentinels in silence stand,
Through the long centuries keeping watch and ward.
Up from the sheer abysses that we tread,
Wherein pale shadow holds her mystic sway,
And night yields never wholly to the day,
To where, in narrowing light far overhead,
Arch capping arch and peak to peak is wed,
We gaze, and veil our eyes in silent awe,
As when Jehovah's form the prophet saw.

INA COOLBRITH.

Outgoing

(An Excerpt)

The trees in sunset tremble goldenly
Through all their leaves. I wander gladly down
Over a bridge across a troubled rill
(Fluttering from its dark with frightened wings);
Beyond, the roadway climbs around the height;
And, look! beneath me, with a music heard
Best in the heart of silence far away,
A falling fleece of silver, shines the dam!
Above, the quiet mirror lets the duck
Float, brooding on its shadow, motionless;
Below, the shallows glitter everywhere,
As if with shoals of hurrying fish that leap
Over each other noisily in the sun;
And, farther down, the greenly-hidden race
Persuades the seeking eye to wander where,
Gray through the boughs of sycamore and elm,
Tremulous with its myriad-moving wheels,
With sullen thunder stands the busy mill;
While over all, through azure haze and dust,
Show the thick spires and the bronzed marble dome,
Transfigured, far off, for my memory,
Made beautiful for my forgetfulness.

John James Piatt.

Georgetown Heights,
near Washington.

Cloudland

In Cloudland, once, a chapel rose,
The body all of lily-blows,
And sunbeams for the steeple;
Blest folks were entering, left and right,
And everywhere went dancing light
Between the pretty people.

On they glided, two by two,
Over the dove hues and the blue,
As never folk before;
The bloom of June shall never win
The lovely tints that fluttered in:
Four cherubs closed the door.

A little turning of the eye,
And, deeper in the curving sky,
Lay moored a floating city;
The fairy roofs, the amber wall —
That earth has not those glories all, —
Ah, more and more's the pity.

Calm lay the city; farther down,
Hard by a little lilac town,
A host engaged in battle;
Such plumes and horses had each knight!
Never before so dire a fight,
With neither shout nor rattle.

The dainty chapel swinging there,
The city floating in the air,
The knights with plumes a-flying, —
Such loveliness, it well might make
The baby angels stay awake
Till the morning stars were dying.

But now, but now, a touch of gray,
And every sunbeam slipped away,
And with them went the steeple;
The chapel sank, the city passed,
The warriors faded, and, at last,
The pretty, pretty people!

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

Clouds

HIGH in the rare crepusculine ether,
Cirrus, and fine, and fading fair,
A purpler film leaves all beneath her,
And hovering where remoter bounds are bare,
Dreams of the vanished light on so serene a height,
And shreds her vapor into ragged air.

Flamed she erewhile on some sunset's bosom,
Scarlet and piled with fleeciest snow,
Crowning the side-sky with ruddy blossom —
To suffer so her sanguine ardors go,
And hang, with meek surrender abandoning her splendor,
Like nothing but the breath of one below?

One long sad cloud that girts the quiet even,
With half a rosy reflex broods,
In doubt if this be earth or that be heaven,
And with wild moods stolen from strange solitudes
Still drifts on slumberous tides, and in a hushed heart hides
Low tunes and melancholy interludes.

O changing clouds, that drop the great sun's glory,
Dimly through gloom to draw your wings,
Till over you stars make the spaces hoary,
And ancient springs to flood your passing brings —
Our lives are vapors, too, we gather like the dew,
And fade and float wherever fortune flings.

HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

Land in Cloud

ABOVE the sunken sun the clouds are fired
With a dark splendor; the enchanted hour
Works momentary miracles in the sky;
Weird shadows take from fancy what they lack
For semblance, and I see a boundless plain,
A mist of sun and sheaves in boundless air,
Gigantic shapes of Reapers moving slow
In some new harvest: — so I can but dream
Of my great Land, that takes its Morning star
Out of the dusky Evening of the East:
My Land, that lifted into vision gleams
Misty and vast, a boundless plain afar,
(Like yonder fading fantasy of cloud,)
With shadowy Reapers moving, vague and slow,
In some wide harvest of the days to be —
A mist of sun and sheaves in boundless air!

JOHN JAMES PIATT.

The Woods that Bring the Sunset Near

THE wind from out the west is blowing;
The homeward-wandering cows are lowing;
Dark grow the pine-woods, dark and drear —
The woods that bring the sunset near.

When o'er wide seas the sun declines,
Far off its fading glory shines, —
Far off, sublime, and full of fear, —
The pine-woods bring the sunset near.

This house that looks to east, to west,
This, dear one, is our home, our rest;
Yonder the stormy sea, and here
The woods that bring the sunset near.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

The Pine Forest of Monterey

(An Excerpt)

Ancient Pines,
Ye bear no record of the years of man.
Spring is your sole historian, — Spring, that paints
These savage shores with hues of Paradise;
That decks your branches with a fresher green,
And through your lonely, far cañadas pours
Her floods of bloom, rivers of opal dye
That wander down to lakes and widening seas
Of blossom and of fragrance, — laughing Spring,
That with her wanton blood refills your veins,
And weds ye to your juicy youth again
With a new ring, the while your rifted bark
Drops odorous tears. Your knotty fibres yield
To the light touch of her unfailing pen,
As freely as the lupin's velvet cup.
Ye keep, close-locked, the memories of her stay,
As in their shells the avelonès keep
Morn's rosy flush and moonlight's pearly glow.
The wild north-west, that from Alaska sweeps,
To drown Point Lobos with the icy scud
And white sea-foam, may rend your boughs and leave
Their blasted antlers tossing in the gale;
Your steadfast hearts are mailed against the shock,
And on their annual nought inscribe
Of such rude visitation. Ye are still
The simple children of a guiltless soil,

And in your natures show the sturdy grain
That passion cannot jar, nor force relax,
Nor aught but sweet and kindly airs compel
To gentler mood.

BAYARD TAYLOR.

Monument Mountain

(An Excerpt)

Thou who wouldst see the lovely and the wild
Mingled in harmony on Nature's face,
Ascend our rocky mountains. Let thy foot
Fail not with weariness, for on their tops
The beauty and the majesty of earth,
Spread wide beneath, shall make thee to forget
The steep and toilsome way. There, as thou stand'st,
The haunts of men below thee, and around
The mountain summits, thy expanding heart
Shall feel a kindred with that loftier world
To which thou art translated, and partake
The enlargement of thy vision. Thou shalt look
Upon the green and rolling forest tops,
And down into the secrets of the glens,
And streams, that with their bordering thickets strive
To hide their windings. Thou shalt gaze, at once,
Here on white villages, and tilth, and herds,
And swarming roads, and there on solitudes
That only hear the torrent, and the wind,
And eagle's shriek. There is a precipice
That seems a fragment of some mighty wall,
Built by the hand that fashioned the old world,
To separate its nations, and thrown down
When the flood drowned them. To the north, a path
Conducts you up the narrow battlement.
Steep is the western side, shaggy and wild
With mossy trees, and pinnacles of flint,

And many a hanging crag. But, to the east,
Sheer to the vale go down the bare old cliffs,—
Huge pillars, that in middle heaven upbear
Their weather-beaten capitals, here dark
With the thick moss of centuries, and there
Of chalky whiteness where the thunderbolt
Has splintered them. It is a fearful thing
To stand upon the beetling verge, and see
Where storm and lightning, from that huge gray wall,
Have tumbled down vast blocks, and at the base
Dashed them in fragments, and to lay thine ear
Over the dizzy depth, and hear the sound
Of winds, that struggle with the woods below,
Come up like ocean murmurs. But the scene
Is lovely round; a beautiful river there
Wanders amid the fresh and fertile meads,
The paradise he made unto himself,
Mining the soil for ages. On each side
The fields swell upward to the hills; beyond,
Above the hills, in the blue distance, rise
The mighty columns with which earth props heaven.

* * * * * * *

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Winter Boughs

How tender and how slow, in sunset's cheer,
Far on the hill, our quiet treetops fade!
A broidery of northern seaweed, laid
Long in a book, were scarce more fine and clear.
Frost, and sad light, and windless atmosphere
Have breathed on them, and of their frailties made
Beauty more sweet than summer's builded shade,
Whose green domes fall, to bring this wonder here.
O ye forgetting and outliving boughs,
With not a plume, gay in the jousts before,
Left for the Archer! so, in evening's eye,
So stilled, so lifted, let your lover die,
Set in the upper calm no voices rouse,
Stript, meek, withdrawn, against the heavenly door.

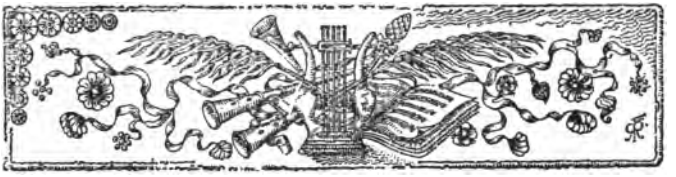
LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY.

II

MUSIC OF WINDS AND STORMS

So raged the storm . . . till night wore into day,
Bringing a peaceful glow to East and West;
A wide, calm sea; a lull; a bird's glad note,
And spent winds resting . . .

ELLA HIGGINSON:
"Storm."



Wind and Sea

I

THE Sea is a jovial comrade,
He laughs wherever he goes;
His merriment shines in the dimpling lines
That wrinkle his hale repose;
He lays himself down at the feet of the Sun,
And shakes all over with glee,
And the broad-backed billows fall faint on the shore,
In the mirth of the mighty Sea!

II

But the Wind is sad and restless,
And cursed with an inward pain;
You may hark as you will, by valley or hill,
But you hear him still complain.
He wails on the barren mountains,
And shrieks on the wintry sea;
He sobs in the cedar, and moans in the pine,
And shudders all over the aspen tree.

III

Welcome are both their voices,
And I know not which is best —
The laughter that slips from the Ocean's lips,
Or the comfortless Wind's unrest.
There's a pang in all rejoicing,
A joy in the heart of pain,
And the Wind that saddens, the Sea that gladdens,
Are singing the self-same strain!

BAYARD TAYLOR.

The Wind Across The Wheat

You ask me for the sweetest sound mine ears have ever heard?
A sweeter than the ripples' plash, or trilling of a bird,
Than tapping of the rain-drops upon the roof at night,
Than the sighing of the pine trees on yonder mountain height?
And I tell you, these are tender, yet never quite so sweet
As the murmur and the cadence of the wind across the wheat.

Have you watched the golden billows in a sunlit sea of grain,
Ere yet the reaper bound the sheaves, to fill the creaking wain?
Have you thought how snow and tempest, and the bitter wintry cold,
Were but the guardian angels, the next year's bread to hold?
A precious thing, unharmèd by the turmoil of the sky,
Just waiting, growing, silently, until the storms went by!

Oh! have you lifted up your heart, to Him who loves us all,
And listens, through the angel-songs, if but a sparrow fall?
And then, thus thinking of His hand, what symphony so sweet
As the music in the long refrain, the wind across the wheat?

It hath the dulcet echoes, from many a lullaby,
Where the cradled babe is hushed beneath the mother's
loving eye.
It hath its heaven-promise, as sure as heaven's throne,
That He who sent the manna, will ever feed His own;
And, though an atom only, 'mid countless hosts who
share
The Maker's never-ceasing watch, the Father's deathless
care,
That atom is as dear to Him, as my dear child to me;
He cannot lose me from my place, through all eternity:
You wonder, when it sings me *this*, there's nothing half
so sweet,
Beneath the circling planets, as the wind across the
wheat?

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

The West Wind

BENEATH the forest's skirts I rest,
Whose branching pines rise dark and high,
And hear the breezes of the West
Among the threaded foliage sigh.

Sweet Zephyr! Why that sound of woe?
Is not thy home among the flowers?
Do not the bright June roses blow,
To meet thy kiss at morning hours?

And lo! thy glorious realm outspread—
Yon stretching valleys, green and gay,
And yon free hill-tops, o'er whose head
The loose white clouds are borne away.

And there the full broad river runs,
And many a fount wells fresh and sweet,
To cool thee when the mid-day suns
Have made thee faint beneath their heat.

Thou wind of joy, and youth, and love;
Spirit of the new-wakened year!
The sun in his blue realm above
Smooths a bright path when thou art here.

In lawns the murmuring bee is heard,
The wooing ring-dove in the shade;
On thy soft breath, the new-fledged bird
Takes wing, half happy, half afraid.

Ah! thou art like our wayward race;—
When not a shade of pain or ill
Dims the bright smile of Nature's face,
Thou lov'st to sigh and murmur still.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Before the Rain

We knew it would rain, for all the morn,
  A spirit on slender ropes of mist
Was lowering its golden buckets down
  Into the vapory amethyst

Of marshes and swamps and dismal fens —
  Scooping the dew that lay in the flowers,
Dipping the jewels out of the sea,
  To scatter them over the land in showers.

We knew it would rain, for the poplars showed
  The white of their leaves, the amber grain
Shrunk in the wind — and the lightning now
  Is tangled in tremulous skeins of rain!

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

Summer's Rain and Winter's Snow

SUMMER'S rain and winter's snow
With the seasons come and go;
Shine and shower;
Tender bud and perfect flower;
Silver blossoms, golden fruit;
Song and lute,
With their inward sound of pain;
Winter's snow and summer's rain;
Frost and fire;
Joy beyond the heart's desire—
And our June comes round again.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

The Storm-Clouds

I STAND beside the River as the night
Unrolls her sombre curtain o'er the day;
The pyres within the west have paled away
And only left their embers, dimly bright,
To 'lume the purple hill-top's sullen height;
Then, from behind the crags, the clouds of gray —
A troop of lions held too long at bay —
Arise from out their antres in their might,
And low along the mountain ridges prowl,
Tossing their shaggy manes with lordly roar;
While, by the lash of lightnings still uncowed,
They, raging and rebellious, long and loud,
Send many an angry and deep-throated growl
Rumbling along the caverns of the shore!

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

Pictures from Appledore

(An Excerpt)

V

How looks Appledore in a storm?
I have seen it when its crags seemed frantic,
Butting against the mad Atlantic,
When surge on surge would leap enorme,
Cliffs of emerald topped with snow,
That lifted and lifted, and then let go
A great white avalanche of thunder,
A grinding, blinding, deafening ire
Monadnock might have trembled under;
And the island, whose rock-roots pierce below
To where they are warmed with the central fire,
You could feel its granite fibres racked,
As it seemed to plunge with a shudder and thrill
Right at the breast of the swooping hill,
And to rise again snorting a cataract
Of rage-froth from every cranny and ledge,
While the sea drew its breath in hoarse and deep,
And the next vast breaker curled its edge,
Gathering itself for a mightier leap.

James Russell Lowell.

Summer Storm

UNTREMULOUS in the river clear,
  Toward the sky's image, hangs the imaged bridge;
So still the air, that I can hear
  The slender clarion of the unseen midge;
Out of the stillness, with a gathering creep,
  Like rising wind in leaves, which now decreases,
  Now lulls, now swells, and the while increases,
The huddling trample of a drove of sheep
  Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradually ceases
In dust on the other side; life's emblem deep,
  A confused noise between two silences,
Finding at last in dust precarious peace.

On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed grasses
  Soak up the sunshine; sleeps the brimming tide,
Save when the wedge-shaped wake in silence passes
  Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous glide
  Wavers the long green sedge's shade from side to side;
But up the West, like a rock-shivered surge,
  Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-whitened spray;
Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its verge,
  And falling still it seems, and yet it climbs alway.

  Suddenly all the sky is hid
  As with the shutting of a lid,
One by one great drops are falling
      Doubtful and slow,
Down the pane they are crookedly crawling,
      And the wind breathes low;

Slowly the circles widen on the river,
  Widen and mingle, one and all;
Here and there the slenderer flowers shiver,
  Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,
  The wind is gathering in the west;
The upturned leaves first whiten and then flutter,
  Then droop to a fitful rest;
Up from the stream with sluggish flap
  Struggles the gull, and floats away;
Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap, —
  We shall not see the sun go down to-day:
Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh,
  And tramples the grass with terrified feet,
The startled river turns leaden and harsh,
  You can hear the quick heart of the tempest beat.

  Look! look! that livid flash!
And instantly follows the rattling thunder,
As if some cloud-crag, split asunder,
  Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,
On the Earth, which crouches in silence under;
  And now a solid gray wall of rain
Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile;
  For a breath's space I see the blue wood again,
And, ere the next heart-beat, the wind-hurled pile,
  That seemed but now a league aloof,
  Bursts crackling o'er the sun-parched roof;
Against the windows the storm comes dashing,
Through tattered foliage the hail tears crashing,

The blue lightning flashes,
The rapid hail clashes,
The white waves are tumbling,
And, in one baffled roar,
Like the toothless sea mumbling
A rock-bristled shore,
The thunder is rumbling,
And crashing and crumbling, —
Will silence return never more?

Hush! Still as death,
The tempest holds his breath
As from a sudden will;
The rain stops short, but from the eaves
You see it drop, and hear it from the leaves,
All is so bodingly still;
Again, now, now, again
Plashes the rain in heavy gouts,
The crinkled lightning
Seems ever brightening,
And loud and long
Again the thunder shouts
His battle-song, —
One quivering flash,
One wildering crash,
Followed by silence dead and dull,
As if the cloud, let go,
Leapt bodily below
To whelm the earth in one mad overthrow,
And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon!
No more my half-crazed fancy there
Can shape a giant in the air,
No more I see his streaming hair,
The writhing portent of his form;—
The pale and quiet moon
Makes her calm forehead bare,
And the last fragments of the storm,
Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,
Silent and few, are drifting over me.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

An August Shower

THE gilded Indian of the village vane
Swirls to the east; and slow the tall tree tops
Wave with the fitful wind that stirs, and stops,
And stirs anew; while gently falls again
The gracious benefaction of the rain.
The pendent garlands of the garden hops
Sway with the breeze; and the blown peach tree drops
Her globes of crimson in the grassy lane.
The thunder, rumbling o'er the distant plain,
Rolls hither from the fields and darkening fells;
The brooklet in the meadow slowly swells;
The rain is come, and gone. Past is the heat.
Happy the cattle in the clover dells —
Happy the flocks that range the stubbled wheat.

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

Summer Shower

A DROP fell on the apple-tree,
Another on the roof;
A half a dozen kissed the eaves,
And made the gables laugh.

A few went out to help the brook,
That went to help the sea.
Myself conjectured, Were they pearls,
What necklaces could be!

The dust replaced in hoisted roads,
The birds jocoser sung;
The sunshine threw his hat away,
The orchards spangles hung.

The breezes brought dejected lutes,
And bathed them in the glee;
The East put out a single flag,
And signed the fête away.

EMILY DICKINSON.

Rain

Oh, the dancing leaves are merry,
And the bloss'ming grass is glad,
But the river's too rough for the ferry
And the sky is low and sad.

Yet the daisies shake with laughter
As the surly wind goes by,
For they know what is hurrying after,
As they watch the dim, gray sky;

The clovers are rosy with saying —
(The buttercups bend to hear)
"Oh, be patient, it is only delaying —
Be glad, for it's very near."

The blushing pimpernel closes;
It isn't because it grieves —
And down in the garden, the roses
Smile out from their lattice of leaves!

Such gladness has stirred the flowers!
Yet children only complain:
"Oh, what is the use of showers?"
"Oh, why does it ever rain?"

Margaret Deland.

After a Tempest

THE day had been a day of wind and storm, —
  The wind was laid, the storm was overpast, —
And stooping from the zenith, bright and warm,
  Shone the great sun on the wide earth at last.
I stood upon the upland slope, and cast
  Mine eye upon a broad and beauteous scene,
Where the vast plain lay girt by mountains vast,
  And hills o'er hills lifted their heads of green,
  With pleasant vales scooped out and villages between.

The rain-drops glistened on the trees around,
  Whose shadows on the tall grass were not stirred,
Save when a shower of diamonds, to the ground,
  Was shaken by the flight of startled bird;
For birds were warbling round, and bees were heard
  About the flowers; the cheerful rivulet sung
And gossiped, as he hastened ocean-ward;
  To the gray oak the squirrel, chiding, clung,
  And chirping from the ground the grasshopper up-sprung.

And from beneath the leaves that kept them dry
  Flew many a glittering insect here and there,
And darted up and down the butterfly,
  That seemed a living blossom of the air.
The flocks came scattering from the thicket, where
  The violent rain had pent them; in the way
Strolled groups of damsels frolicksome and fair;
  The farmer swung the scythe or turned the hay,
  And 'twixt the heavy swaths his children were at play.

It was a scene of peace — and, like a spell,
Did that serene and golden sunlight fall
Upon the motionless wood that clothed the fell,
And precipice upspringing like a wall,
And glassy river and white waterfall,
And happy living things that trod the bright
And beauteous scene; while far beyond them all,
On many a lovely valley, out of sight,
Was poured from the blue heavens the same soft golden light.

I looked, and thought the quiet of the scene
An emblem of the peace that yet shall be,
When o'er earth's continents, and isles between,
The noise of war shall cease from sea to sea,
And married nations dwell in harmony;
When millions, crouching in the dust to one,
No more shall beg their lives on bended knee,
Nor the black stake be dressed, nor in the sun
The o'erlaboured captive toil, and wish his life were done.

Too long, at clash of arms amid her bowers
And pools of blood, the earth has stood aghast,
The fair earth, that should only blush with flowers
And ruddy fruits; but not for aye can last
The storm, and sweet the sunshine when 'tis past.
Lo, the clouds roll away — they break — they fly,
And, like the glorious light of summer, cast
O'er the wide landscape from the embracing sky,
On all the peaceful world the smile of heaven shall lie.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

The Snow Storm

ANNOUNCED by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the house-mates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work,
So fanciful, so savage, naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Snowflakes

WHAT are you — you delicate stray things,
Floating and falling
Through the soft air?
Are you some child-angel's playthings,
Gone past recalling,
Dropped unaware?

Did he, to the stars a near neighbor,
A smiling-eyed dreamer,
Study their form,
Then make you with lightest of labor —
Young heavenly schemer
Above the white storm?

EDITH M. THOMAS.

Song of the Snowflakes

FROM the cloudy fountain
Down to the mountain,
Down from the mountain into the vale,
It's ho, to go, to drift and sail,
To glisten along the wintry gale!
  Round and round
  With never a sound,
  Hill to hollow
  We fall and follow;
Here and there, here and there,
Riding the ways of air.

It's hither and thither,
Every whither,
Over the land and over the lake;
Winds may sleep or winds may wake,
Thicker and faster, flake to flake,
  White, all white,
  Spirits of light,
  Hill to hollow
  We flock and follow;
Here and there, everywhere,
Riding the ways of air.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

III

SEA, STREAMS, AND TIDES

There is no limit to thy strength, no end
To thy magnificence. Thou goest forth
On thy long journeys to remotest lands,
And comest back unwearied.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD:
"Hymn to the Sea."

Sea-Pictures

OFF THE HAVEN

Up stole a fog, a chill and ghastly thing,
That gloomed the sea and hid her face from me;
My soul was like a bird with broken wing;
A dismal bell warned homing barks away.

Then shot a sun-shaft; like a phantom host,
Born of the night and mailed in sullen white,
The river mists drew off and lo! the coast
Lay green and glad beyond the waters gray.

RICHARD BURTON.

Sea-Fog

OUT of the sensuous sunlands of the south
  On wings of gold a lustrous spirit came,
The smile of summer lingering round her mouth,
  Her languorous eyes noon-fervent as with flame.

Out from the pallid aisleways of the pole
  A sombre spirit sped adown the sea;
Snow-raimented as is the shrivèd soul,
  Wan-browed and weird and spectre-like was he.

Somewhere upon the landless void these twain,
  In that dim, dateless æon of the dead,
Met as they moved above the mighty main,
  Loved with immortal rapture, and were wed.

From this strange union was one daughter born,
  A lithe, elusive creature, evermore
Blinding the stars, bewildering the morn,
  And winging like a wraith from shore to shore.

With the soft, white persuasion of her lips
  More to be feared than all the sirens she;
Snared by her spells, how many stately ships
  Will sail no more the blue paths of the sea!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

The Building of the Ship

(An Excerpt)

The ocean old,
Centuries old,
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
Paces restless to and fro,
Up and down the sands of gold.
His beating heart is not at rest;
And far and wide,
With ceaseless flow,
His beard of snow
Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
He waits impatient for his bride.
There she stands,
With her foot upon the sands,
Decked with flags and streamers gay,
In honor of her marriage day,
Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,
Round her like a veil descending,
Ready to be
The bride of the gray, old sea.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Patroling Barnegat

WILD, wild the storm, and the sea high running,
Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone muttering,
Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing,
Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing,
Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering,
On beachy slush and sand spirits of snow fierce slanting,
Where through the murk the easterly death-wind breasting,
Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing,
(That in the distance! is that a wreck? is the red signal flaring?)

Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight wending,
Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting,
Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs careering,
A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night confronting,
That savage trinity warily watching.

WALT WHITMAN.

Hampton Beach

THE sunlight glitters keen and bright,
Where, miles away,
Lies stretching to my dazzled sight
A luminous belt, a misty light,
Beyond the dark pine bluffs and wastes of sandy grey.

The tremulous shadow of the Sea!
Against its ground
Of silvery light, rock, hill, and tree,
Still as a picture, clear and free,
With varying outline mark the coast for miles around.

On — on — we tread with loose-flung rein
Our seaward way,
Through dark-green fields and blossoming grain,
Where the wild brier-rose skirts the lane,
And bends above our heads the flowering locust spray.

Ha! like a kind hand on my brow
Comes this fresh breeze,
Cooling its dull and feverish glow,
While through my being seems to flow
The breath of a new life — the healing of the seas!

Now rest we, where this grassy mound
His feet hath set
In the great waters, where have bound
His granite ancles greenly round
With long and tangled moss, and weeds with cool spray wet.

Good-bye to Pain and Care! I take
Mine ease to-day;
Here where these sunny waters break,
And ripples this keen breeze, I shake
All burdens from my heart, all weary thoughts away.

I draw a freer breath — I seem
Like all I see —
Waves in the sun — the white-winged gleam
Of sea-birds in the slanting beam —
And far-off sails which flit before the South wind free.

So when Time's veil shall fall asunder,
The soul may know
No fearful change, nor sudden wonder,
Nor sink the weight of mystery under,
But with the upward rise, and with the vastness grow.

And all we shrink from now may seem
No new revealing;
Familiar as our childhood's stream,
Or pleasant memory of a dream,
The loved and cherished Past upon the new life stealing.

Serene and mild the untried light
May have its dawning;
And, as in Summer's northern night
The evening and the dawn unite,
The sunset hues of Time blend with the soul's new morning.

I sit alone: in foam and spray
Wave after wave
Breaks on the rocks which, stern and grey,
Beneath like fallen Titans lay,
Or murmurs hoarse and strong through mossy cleft and cave.

What heed I of the dusty land
And noisy town?
I see the mighty deep expand
From its white line of glimmering sand
To where the blue of heaven on bluer waves shuts down!

In listless quietude of mind,
I yield to all
The change of cloud and wave and wind,
And passive on the flood reclined,
I wander with the waves, and with them rise and fall.

But look, thou dreamer! wave and shore
In shadow lie;
The night-wind warns me back once more
To where my native hilltops o'er
Bends like an arch of fire the glowing sunset sky!

So then, beach, bluff, and wave, farewell!
I bear with me
No token stone nor glittering shell,
But long and oft shall Memory tell
Of this brief thoughtful hour of musing by the Sea.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

Green River

WHEN breezes are soft and skies are fair,
I steal an hour from study and care,
And hie me away to the woodland scene,
Where wanders the stream with waters of green,
As if the bright fringe of herbs on its brink,
Had given their stain to the wave they drink;
And they, whose meadows it murmurs through,
Have named the stream from its own fair hue.

Yet pure its waters — its shallows are bright
With coloured pebbles and sparkles of light,
And clear the depths where its eddies play,
And dimples deepen and whirl away,
And the plane-tree's speckled arms o'er shoot
The swifter current that mines its root,
Through whose shifting leaves, as you walk the hill,
The quivering glimmer of sun and rill,
With a sudden flash on the eye is thrown,
Like the ray that streams from the diamond stone.
Oh, loveliest there the spring days come,
With blossoms, and birds, and wild-bees' hum;
The flowers of summer are fairest there,
And freshest the breath of the summer air;
And sweetest the golden autumn day
In silence and sunshine glides away.

Yet fair as thou art, thou shun'st to glide,
Beautiful stream! by the village side;
But windest away from haunts of men,
To quiet valley and shaded glen;
And forest, and meadow, and slope of hill,
Around thee, are lonely, lovely, and still,
Lonely — save when, by thy rippling tides,
From thicket to thicket the angler glides;
Or the simpler comes with basket and book,
For herbs of power on thy banks to look;
Or haply, some idle dreamer, like me,
To wander, and muse, and gaze on thee.
Still — save the chirp of birds that feed
On the river cherry and seedy reed,
And thy own wild music gushing out
With mellow murmur and fairy shout,
From dawn to the blush of another day,
Like traveller singing along his way.

That fairy music I never hear,
Nor gaze on those waters so green and clear,
And mark them winding away from sight,
Darkened with shade, or flashing with light,
While o'er them the vine to its thicket clings,
And the zephyr stoops to freshen his wings, —
But I wish that fate had left me free
To wander these quiet haunts with thee,
Till the eating cares of earth should depart,
And the peace of the scene pass into my heart;
And I envy thy stream, as it glides along,
Through its beautiful banks in a trance of song.

Though forced to drudge for the dregs of men,
And scrawl strange words with the barbarous pen,
And mingle among the jostling crowd,
Where the sons of strife are subtle and loud —
I often come to this quiet place,
To breathe the air that ruffles thy face,
And gaze upon thee in silent dream,
For in thy lonely and lovely stream
An image of that calm life appears
That won my heart in my greener years.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

The Wabash

THERE is a river singing in between
Bright fringes of pawpaw and sycamore,
That stir to fragrant winds on either shore,
Where tall blue herons stretch lithe necks, and lean
Over clear currents flowing cool and thin
Through the clean furrows of the pebbly floor.

My own glad river. Though unclassic, still
Haunted of merry gods whose pipings fill
With music all thy golden willow-brakes!
Above thee halcyon lifts his regal crest;
The tulip-tree flings thee its flower-flakes,
The tall flag over thee its lances shakes:
With every charm of beauty thou art blest,
O happiest river of the happy West!

MAURICE THOMPSON.

The Merrimack

(An Excerpt)

But look! — the yellow light no more
Streams down on wave and verdant shore;
And clearly on the calm air swells
The distant voice of twilight bells.
From Ocean's bosom, white and thin
The mists come slowly rolling in;
Hills, woods, the river's rocky rim,
Amidst the sea-like vapor swim,
While yonder lonely coast-light set
Within its wave-washed minaret,
Half quenched, a beamless star and pale,
Shines dimly through its cloudy veil!

John Greenleaf Whittier.

Low Tide on Grand-Pré

THE sun goes down, and over all
These barren reaches by the tide
Such unelusive glories fall,
I almost dream they yet will bide
Until the coming of the tide.

And yet I know that not for us,
By any ecstasy of dream,
He lingers to keep luminous
A little while the grievous stream,
Which frets, uncomforted of dream, —

A grievous stream, that to and fro
Athrough the fields of Acadie
Goes wandering, as if to know
Why one beloved face should be
So long from home and Acadie!

Was it a year or lives ago
We took the grasses in our hands,
And caught the summer flying low
Over the waving meadow lands,
And held it there between our hands?

The while the river at our feet—
A drowsy inland meadow stream —
At set of sun the after-heat
Made running gold, and in the gleam
We freed our birch upon the stream.

There down along the elms at dusk,
We lifted dripping blade to drift,
Through twilight scented fine like musk,
Where night and gloom awhile uplift,
Nor sunder soul and soul adrift.

And that we took into our hands —
Spirit of life or subtler thing —
Breathed on us there, and loosed the bands
Of death, and taught us, whispering,
The secret of some wonder-thing.

Then all your face grew light, and seemed
To hold the shadow of the sun;
The evening faltered, and I deemed
That time was ripe, and years had done
Their wheeling underneath the sun.

So all desire and all regret,
And fear and memory, were naught;
One to remember or forget
The keen delight our hearts had caught;
Morrow and yesterday were naught!

The night has fallen, and the tide . . .
Now and again comes drifting home,
Across these aching barrens wide,
A sigh like driven wind or foam;
In grief the flood is bursting home!

BLISS CARMAN.

The Waves at Midnight

(THE CLIFFS, NEWPORT)

SEEN in the night by
Their snow, as they crush,
Evermore saying —
Hush — hush — hush —
They fall, and they die,
Break, and perish, without reply.

And are and are not,
And come back again
With the sob and throb
Of a constant pain,
And snatch from afar
The tremulous light of a single star.

Always the cliffs hear,
How mournfully sweet
Their murmurous music,
Their cry of defeat,
As near and more near
They shiver and die in darkness drear.

Blacker the cliffs be,
And blacker the night,
Where tender with sorrow,
Where eager for light,
The waves of life's sea
Wail, crushed at an answerless cliff-wall for me.

S. WEIR MITCHELL.

The Waves

I

CHILDREN are we
Of the restless sea,
Swelling in anger or sparkling in glee:
We follow our race,
In shifting chase,
Over the boundless ocean-space!
Who had beheld where the race begun?
Who shall behold it run?
Who shall behold it run?

II

When the smooth airs keep
Their noontide sleep,
We dimple the cheek of the dreaming deep;
When the rough winds come
From their cloudy home,
At the tap of the hurricane's thunder-drum,
Deep are the furrows of wrath we plough,
Ridging his darkened brow!
Ridging his darkened brow!

III

Over us born,
The unclouded Morn
Trumpets her joy with the Triton's horn;
And sun and star
By the thousand are

Orbed in our glittering, near and far:
And the splendor of Heaven, the pomp of Day,
Shine in our laughing spray!
Shine in our laughing spray!

IV

We murmur our spell
Over sand and shell;
We girdle the reef with a combing swell;
And bound in the vice
Of the Arctic ice,
We build us a palace of grand device, —
Walls of crystal and splintered spires,
Flashing with diamond fires!
Flashing with diamond fires!

V

In the endless round
Of our motion and sound,
The fairest dwelling of Beauty is found,
And with voice of strange
And solemn change,
The elements speak in our world-wide range,
Harping the terror, the might, the mirth,
Sorrows and hopes of Earth!
Sorrows and hopes of Earth!

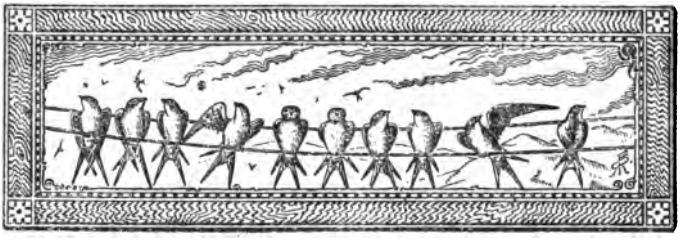
BAYARD TAYLOR.

IV

BIRD-NOTES AND CRICKETS' CHIRP

There are notes of joy from the hang-bird and wren,
And the gossip of swallows through all the sky;
The ground-squirrel gaily chirps by his den,
And the wilding bee hums merrily by.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT:
"The Gladness of Nature."



When the Birds Go North Again

Oh, every year hath its winter,
And every year hath its rain —
But a day is always coming
When the birds go North again.

When new leaves swell in the forest,
And grass springs green on the plain,
And the alder's veins turn crimson —
And the birds go North again.

Oh, every heart hath its sorrow,
And every heart hath its pain —
But a day is always coming
When the birds go North again.

'Tis the sweetest thing to remember
If courage be on the wane,
When the cold dark days are over —
Why, the birds go North again.

ELLA HIGGINSON.

The Birds and I

(A SONG OF SPRING)

A THOUSAND voices whisper it is spring;
Shy flowers start up to greet me on the way,
And homing birds preen their swift wings and sing
The praises of the friendly, lengthening day.

The buds whose breath the glad wind hither bears,
Whose tender secret the young May shall find,
Seem all for me — for me the softer airs,
The gentle warmth, wherewith the day is kind.

Let me rejoice, now skies are blue and bright,
And the round world pay tribute to the spring;
The birds and I will carol our delight,
And every breeze Love's messages shall bring.

What matter tho' sometimes the cup of tears
We drink, instead of the rich wine of mirth?
There are as many springs as there are years;
And, glad or sad, we love the dear old Earth.

Shall we come back, like birds, from some far sphere —
We and the Spring together — and be glad
With the old joy to hail the sweet young year,
And to remember what good days we had?

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

The Song-Sparrow

In this sweet, tranquil afternoon of Spring,
While the low sun declines in the clear west,
I sit and hear the blithe song-sparrow sing
His strain of rapture not to be suppressed:
Pondering life's problem strange, while death draws near, —
I listen to his dauntless song of cheer.

His shadow flits across the quiet stone:
Like that brief transit is my space of days;
For, like a flower's faint perfume, youth is flown
Already, and there rests on all life's ways
A dimness; closer my beloved I clasp,
For all dear things seem slipping from my grasp.

Death touches all; the light of loving eyes
Goes out in darkness, comfort is withdrawn;
Lonely, and lonelier still the pathway lies,
Going toward the fading sunset from the dawn:
Yet hark! with those fine notes the silence break
As if all trouble were some grave mistake!

Thou little bird, how canst thou thus rejoice,
As if the world had known nor sin nor curse?
God never meant to mock us with that voice!
That is the key-note of the universe,
That song of perfect trust, of perfect cheer,
Courageous, constant, free of doubt or fear.

My little helper, ah, my comrade sweet,
  My old companion in that far off time
When on life's threshold childhood's wingèd feet
  Danced in the sunrise! Joy was at its prime
When all my heart responded to thy song,
  Unconscious of earth's discords harsh and strong.

Now, grown aweary, sad with change and loss,
  With the enigma of myself dismayed;
Poor, save in deep desire to bear the cross
  God's hand on His defenceless creatures laid,
With patience, — here I sit this eve of spring,
  And listen with bowed head, while thou dost sing.

And slowly all my soul with comfort fills,
  And the old hope revives and courage grows;
Up the deserted shore a fresh tide thrills,
  And like a dream the dark mood melts and goes,
And with thy joy again will I rejoice:
  God never meant to mock us with that voice!

CELIA THAXTER.

The Thrush

OFT have I seen at eventide the thrush
Embowered in the topmost branches fair,
Warbling her love-lay in the golden air,
As on her beating breast the sunset flush
Lay like a glory, and the twilight hush
Deepened between the sobs of song that there
Filled the dark groves with eloquent despair;
While all the listening laurel underbrush
Trembled and thrilled its myriad leaves among
Till the white wood-nymph, as she silent stood,
Leaned forward her sweet neck a-listening long,—
Held captive in the darkening solitude,
Chained by the necromancer of the wood,
Enraptured by the ecstasies of song!

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

The Stormy Petrel

ONWARD forever by thy spirit borne
Bird of the dim illimitable seas!
Winging wild gulfs of water at thine ease
When all the surging waves with winds are torn;
Thou for the shore hast never-ending scorn,
And with thy brave heart to the howling breeze
Trustest thy life and all thy destinies.
O wanderer of lone waters half forlorn,
By that dark demon, too, thou art possessed,
That drives thee through the storm at any cost —
Bird of the wave! my soul, as thine, is crossed
By the same spirit of undying quest —
Far on the shoreless ocean of unrest
Driven forever, and forever tossed!

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

Meadow-Larks

SWEET, sweet, sweet! O happy that I am!
(Listen to the meadow-larks, across the fields that sing!)
Sweet, sweet, sweet! O subtle breath of balm,
O winds that blow, O buds that grow, O rapture of the spring!

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O skies, serene and blue,
That shut the velvet pastures in, that fold the mountain's crest!
Sweet, sweet, sweet! What of the clouds ye knew?
The vessels ride a golden tide, upon a sea at rest.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! Who prates of care and pain?
Who says that life is sorrowful? O life so glad, so fleet!
Ah! he who lives the noblest life finds life the noblest gain,
The tears of pain a tender rain to make its waters sweet.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O happy world that is!
Dear heart, I hear across the fields my mateling pipe and call.
Sweet, sweet, sweet! O world so full of bliss, —
For life is love, the world is love, and love is over all!

INA COOLBRITH.

Swallow Song

(From the Greek)

Hurrah, the swallow, the swallow is come,
Bringing the spring from his southern home,
  The beautiful hours, the beautiful year!
Hurrah, the swallow is back from his flight,
With his back of jet and his breast of white,
  The Summer's earliest harbinger!

Come, roll out some figs from your cellar, old fellow!
Bring a beaker of wine that is ruddy and mellow,
  And a wicker crate heaped up with cheese!
Be it bread of pulse or bread of wheat,
The swallow will not disdain to eat.
  Oh, the swallow and spring, and the buds and the breezes!

Will you send us away, or shall we receive
The best that your larder is able to give?
  We warn you — be generous, for if you say nay,
Your gate shall be torn from its hinge and destroyed,
Or your wife, who is sitting within, be decoyed, —
  She is small, we can easily bear her away.

Bring your gifts to the swallow, but if you bring aught,
Bring all that you can, bring more than is sought;
  Open your doors for his welcoming;
For we are not grey old men, not we,
But children who laugh in juvenile glee,
  And sing in life's springtide this song of the spring.

Richard Hovey.

To a Waterfowl

WHITHER, 'midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast, —
The desert and illimitable air, —
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

The Blue Heron

WHERE water-grass grows overgreen
On damp cool flats by gentle streams,
Still as a ghost and sad of mien,
With half-closed eyes the heron dreams.

Above him in the sycamore
The flicker beats a dull tattoo;
Through pawpaw groves the soft airs pour
Gold dust of blooms and fragrance new.

And from the thorn it loves so well,
The oriole flings out its strong,
Sharp lay, wrought in the crucible
Of its flame-circled soul of song.

The heron nods. The charming runes
Of Nature's music thrill his dreams;
The joys of many Mays and Junes
Wash past him like cool summer streams.

What tranquil life, what joyful rest,
To feel the touch of fragrant grass,
And doze like him, while tenderest
Dream-waves across my sleep would pass!

MAURICE THOMPSON.

The Winter Robin

SURSUM CORDA

Now is that sad time of year
When no flower or leaf is here;
When in misty Southern ways
Oriole and jay have flown,
And of all sweet birds, alone
The robin stays.

So give thanks at Christmas-tide;
Hopes of springtime yet abide!
See, in spite of darksome days,
Wind and rain and bitter chill,
Snow, and sleet-hung branches, still
The robin stays!

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

In the Rain

O ROBIN, robin, singing in the rain,
While black clouds lower
Above your bower!
O swallow, swallow, pouring forth your strain
Of hope and cheer,
While dull and drear,
The gray skies bend above your soaring flight!—
Come bring, come bring
To us your spring
Of joyous hopefulness and sure delight!

Come teach our human hearts your lack of fear,
From day to day,
Though skies be gray;
Your happy faith and trust that somewhere near,
Just out of sight,
The sun's bright light
Doth wait to break, and make the world anew;
Doth wait to lift
The rainy rift,
The lowering clouds, and show Heaven shining through.

NORA PERRY.

The Bluebird

In the very spring,
Nay, in the bluster of March, or haply before,
The bluebird comes, and a-wing
Or alight, seems evermore
For song that is sweet and soft.
His footprints oft
Make fretwork along the snow,
When the weather is bleak ablow,
When his hardihood by cold is pinched full sore.

Then deep in the fall
In the Indian-summer while, in the dreamy days,
When the errant songsters all
Grow slack in songful ways,
You may hear his warble still
By field or hill;
Until, with an azure rush
Of motion, music — hush!
He is off, he is mutely whelmed in the southern haze!

RICHARD BURTON.

The Blue Jay

No brigadier throughout the year
  So civic as the jay.
A neighbor and a warrior too,
  With shrill felicity.

Pursuing winds that censure us
  A February day,
The brother of the universe
  Was never blown away.

The snow and he are intimate;
  I've often seen them play
When heaven looked upon us all,
  With such severity,

I felt apology were due
  To an insulted sky,
Whose pompous frown was nutriment
  To their temerity.

The pillow of this daring head
  Is pungent evergreens;
His larder — terse and militant —
  Unknown, refreshing things;

His character a tonic,
  His future a dispute;
Unfair an immortality
  That leaves this neighbor out.

EMILY DICKINSON.

The Bobolinks

WHEN Nature had made all her birds,
With no more cares to think on,
She gave a rippling laugh, and out
There flew a Bobolinkon.

She laughed again; out flew a mate:
A breeze of Eden bore them
Across the fields of Paradise,
The sunrise reddening o'er them.

Incarnate sport and holiday,
They flew and sang forever;
Their souls through June were all in tune,
Their wings were weary never.

Their tribe, still drunk with air and light,
And perfume of the meadow,
Go reeling up and down the sky,
In sunshine and in shadow.

One springs from out the dew-wet grass;
Another follows after;
The morn is thrilling with their songs
And peals of fairy laughter.

From out the marshes and the brook,
They set the tall reeds swinging,
And meet, and frolic in the air,
Half prattling and half singing.

When morning winds sweep meadow-lands,
In green and russet billows,
And toss the lonely elm-tree's boughs,
And silver all the willows,

I see you buffeting the breeze,
Or with its motion swaying,
Your notes half drowned against the wind,
Or down the current playing.

When far away o'er grassy flats,
Where the thick wood commences,
The white-sleeved mowers look like specks
Beyond the zigzag fences,

And noon is hot, and barn-roofs gleam
White in the pale blue distance,
I hear the saucy minstrels still
In chattering persistence.

When Eve her domes of opal fire
Piles round the blue horizon,
Or thunder rolls from hill to hill
A Kyrie Eleison,

Still merriest of the merry birds,
Your sparkle is unfading; —
Pied harlequins of June, — no end
Of song and masquerading.

What cadences of bubbling mirth,
Too quick for bar and rhythm!
What ecstasies, too full to keep
Coherent measure with them!

O could I share, without champagne
  Or muscadel, your frolic,
The glad delirium of your joy,
  Your fun un-apostolic,

Your drunken jargon through the fields,
  Your bobolinkish gabble,
Your fine Anacreontic glee,
  Your tipsy reveller's babble!

Nay, let me not profane such joy
  With similes of folly;
No wine of earth could waken songs
  So delicately jolly!

O boundless self-contentment, voiced
  In flying air-born bubbles!
O joy that mocks our sad unrest,
  And drowns our earth-born troubles!

Hope springs with you: I dread no more
  Despondency and dulness;
For Good Supreme can never fail,
  That gives such perfect fulness.

The life that floods the happy fields
  With song and light and color
Will shape our lives to richer states,
  And heap our measures fuller.

CHRISTOPHER P. CRANCH.

A Little Brother of the Fields

WHO's roistering down the orchard,
  There where the clover thins?
Some rascal's deep in liquor,
  And chuckling o'er his sins.

Hark! where the hedge-rose blushes
  Dost hear the cannikin clink?
Dost hear the flagon's gurgling:
  "Bubble-link — bubble-link — bubble-link?"

Eh! — but the rogue is tipsy! —
  The wine's upon his lips! —
What madrigal o' joyance
  Betwixt the bubbling slips!

Nay, Gossip, — thou misjudgest, —
  Look, where the grass tilts down,
In pilgrim cowl and cassock
  With legs o' buskined brown,

A saintly palmer chaunteth, —
  From South to North he fares, —
A black-and-white Dominican
  Who feeds on rice — and prayers.

Ods faith! That scamp a pilgrim?
  Then Joy doth trudge with him,
And all the beads he telleth
  Slip at the beaker's brim.

An "Ave" would'st thou name it,
  His maudlin, juggling tune?—
He's emptied every pottle
  That e'er was flasked in June!

The ranty Roister Doister,
  Misgrace to cowl and cope!—
Ah!—list!—had I his tipple,
  I would not be the Pope!

EDNAH PROCTOR CLARKE.

The Cat-Bird

He sits on a branch of yon blossoming bush,
This madcap cousin of robin and thrush,
And sings without ceasing the whole morning long;
Now wild, now tender, the wayward song
That flows from his soft, gray, fluttering throat;
But often he stops in his sweetest note,
And, shaking a flower from the blossoming bough,
Drawls out, "Mi-eu, mi-ow!"

Dear merry mocker, your mimic art
Makes drowsy Grimalkin awake with a start,
And peer all around with a puzzled air —
For who would suppose that one would dare
To mimic the voice of a mortal foe!
You're safe on the bough, as well you know;
And if ever a bird could laugh, 'tis you,
Drawling, "Mi-ow, mi-eu!"

Edith M. Thomas.

Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking

(AN EXCERPT)

ONCE Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great sun!
While we bask, we two together.

Two together!
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden,
May-be killed, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! Blow! Blow!
Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;
I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

* * * * * * *

Loud! Loud! Loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!
High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,
Surely you must know who is here, is here,
You must know who I am, my love.

Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

* * * * * * *

O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping into the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!
In the air, in the woods, over fields,
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my mate no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

WALT WHITMAN.

The Singer

O LARK! sweet lark!
Where learn you all your minstrelsy?
What realms are those to which you fly?
While robins feed their young from dawn till dark,
You soar on high, —
Forever in the sky.

O child! dear child!
Above the clouds I lift my wing
To hear the bells of Heaven ring;
Some of their music, though my flights be wild,
To Earth I bring;
Then let me soar and sing!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

The Flight of the Birds

WHITHER away, Robin,
Whither away?
Is it through envy of the maple-leaf,
Whose blushes mock the crimson of thy breast,
Thou wilt not stay?
The summer days were long, yet all too brief
The happy season thou hast been our guest:
Whither away?

Whither away, Bluebird,
Whither away?
The blast is chill, yet in the upper sky
Thou still canst find the color of thy wing,
The hue of May.
Warbler, why speed thy southern flight? ah, why,
Thou too, whose song first told us of the Spring?
Whither away?

Whither away, Swallow,
Whither away?
Canst thou no longer tarry in the North,
Here, where our roof so well hath screened thy nest?
Not one short day?
Wilt thou — as if thou human wert — go forth,
And wanton far from them who love thee best?
Whither away?

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

Birds of Passage

In the budding woods the April days,
Faint with fragrance from the life begun,
Where the early fluttering sunbeam plays
Like a prisoned creature of the sun,
With sweet trill or plaintive note,
Quick pulsation of a throat,
With the life and light of Spring.
There the birds of April sing.

When the sunny Summer days are long,
And the woods are green and full and fair,
Richer, stronger, freer falls the song,
Warm, melodious, on the vibrant air;
Though more seldom comes the tune
In the golden days of June,
Yet, upborne on restless wing,
Happy birds of Summer sing.

When the glowing Autumn days are past,
And the woods stand brown against the sky,
When the north wind breathes a chilling blast,
Southward see the birds of Autumn fly!
As they sing a parting strain
To the music of the rain,
Spring and Summer cannot bring
What the birds of Autumn sing!

Dora Read Goodale.

The Humming-Bird

A FLASH of harmless lightning,
A mist of rainbow dyes,
The burnished sunbeams brightening,
From flower to flower he flies:

While wakes the nodding blossom,
But just too late to see
What lip hath touched her bosom
And drained her nectary.

JOHN B. TABB.

Cricket Song

WELCOME with thy clicking, cricket!
  Clicking songs of sober mirth;
Autumn, stripping field and thicket,
  Brings thee to my hearth,
Where thy clicking shrills and quickens,
While the mist of twilight thickens.

Lately, by the garden wicket,
  Where the thick grass grew unclipt,
And the rill beside thee, cricket,
  Silver-trickling slipt.
Thou, in midday's silent glitter,
Mocked the flickering linnet's twitter.

Now thou art, my cheerful cricket,
  Nimble quickener of my song;
Not a thought but thou shalt nick it
  In thy lowly tongue,
And my clock, the moments ticking,
Is thy constant clicking, clicking.

No annoy, good-humored cricket,
  With thy trills is ever blent;
Spleen of mine, how dost thou trick it
  To a calm content!
So, by thicket, hearth, or wicket,
Click thy little lifetime, cricket!

BAYARD TAYLOR.

The Last Cricket

HEY, piper, in the lean gray grass,
The crackling blades o' Hallowmas,
Ho, piper, sooth to hear!
Pipe me the sweetest thing I know,
(Save Yesterday), — aye, at it so! —
The last rose of the year!

Yet hold, my little piper there!
The wind has blown the brier bare,
That mocked us so with June.
They twain are gone the selfsame way —
The red last rose and Yesterday —
What else is worth a tune?

Quick, pipe me, pipe this weather fleet,
The bitter of it and the sweet;
Pipe me the coming snows;
The ragged nest upon the wall;
Pipe me the saddest of them all,
The year without a rose!

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

To an Insect

I LOVE to hear thine earnest voice,
  Wherever thou art hid,
Thou testy little dogmatist,
  Thou pretty Katydid!
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks, —
  Old gentlefolks are they, —
Thou sayst an undisputed thing
  In such a solemn way.

Thou art a female, Katydid!
  I know it by the trill
That quivers through thy piercing notes,
  So petulant and shrill.
I think there is a knot of you
  Beneath the hollow tree, —
A knot of spinster Katydids, —
  Do Katydids drink tea?

O tell me where did Katy live,
  And what did Katy do?
And was she very fair and young,
  And yet so wicked, too?
Did Katy love a naughty man,
  Or kiss more cheeks than one?
I warrant Katy did no more
  Than many a Kate has done.

Dear me! I'll tell you all about
My fuss with little Jane,
And Ann, with whom I used to walk
So often down the lane,
And all that tore their locks of black,
Or wet their eyes of blue, —
Pray tell me, sweetest Katydid,
What did poor Katy do?

Ah no! the living oak shall crash,
That stood for ages still,
The rock shall rend its mossy base
And thunder down the hill,
Before the little Katydid
Shall add one word, to tell
The mystic story of the maid
Whose name she knows so well.

Peace to the ever-murmuring race!
And when the latest one
Shall fold in death her feeble wings
Beneath the autumn sun,
Then shall she raise her fainting voice
And lift her drooping lid,
And then the child of future years
Shall hear what Katy did.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

The Humble-Bee

Burly, dozing, humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun,
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean of June,
Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum, —
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall,
And, with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With a color of romance,
And, infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,

Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and bird-like pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodels,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,
Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue,
And brier roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,

Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
When the fierce north-western blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

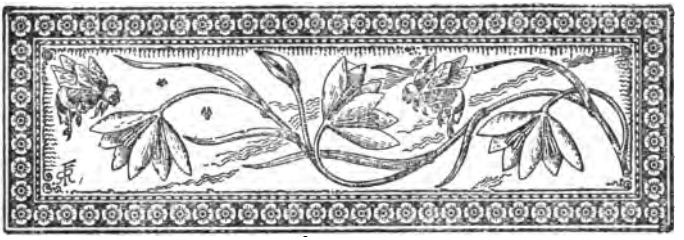
RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

V

FLOWER-SONGS

In all places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
How akin they are to human things.

LONGFELLOW:
"Flowers."



The Snowdrop

You ask why Spring's fair first-born flower is white:
Peering from out the warm earth long ago,
It saw above its head great drifts of snow,
And blanched with fright.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

The Snowdrop

"A NUN of Winter's sisterhood,"
A Snowdrop in the garden stood
Alone amid the solitude
That round her lay.

No sister blossom there was seen;
No memory of what had been;
No promise of returning green,
Or scented spray:

But she alone was bold to bear
The banner of the Spring, and dare,
In Winter's stern despite, declare
A gentler sway.

So didst thou, Damien, when the glow
Of faith and hope was waning low,
For souls bewintered dare the snow,
And lead the way.

JOHN B. TABB.

May-flowers

If you catch a breath of sweetness,
And follow the odorous hint
Through woods where the dead leaves rustle,
And the golden mosses glint,

Along the spicy sea-coast,
Over the desolate down,
You will find the dainty May-flowers
When you come to Plymouth town.

Where the shy Spring tends her darlings,
And hides them away from sight,
Pull off the covering leaf-sprays,
And gather them, pink and white,

Tinted by mystical moonlight,
Freshened by frosty dew,
Till the fair, transparent blossoms
To their pure perfection grew.

Then carry them home to your lady,
For Flower of the Spring is she, —
Pink and white, and dainty and slight,
And lovely as Love can be.

Shall they die because of her beauty?
Shall they live because she is sweet?
They will know the fate they were born for,
But you — must wait at her feet.

Louise Chandler Moulton.

Arbutus

ALONG the wood's brown edge
  The wind goes wandering,
To find the first pink pledge —
  The hint of Spring.

The withered leaves around,
  She scatters every one,
And gives to wintry ground
  A glimpse of sun.

And to the woodland dumb
  And desolate so long
She calls the birds to come
  With happy song.

Then the arbutus! This
  The pledge, the hint she sought, —
The blush, the breath, the kiss, —
  Spring's very thought!

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.

The Rhodora

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER ?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew;
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The Violet

HERE she is again, the dear,
Sweetest vestal of the year,

In her little purple hood,
Brightening the lonesome wood.

We who, something worn with care,
Take the road, find unaware

Joy that heartens, hope that thrills,
Love our cup of life that fills,

Since in Spring's remembered nooks,
Lifting fain familiar looks,

Once again with curtesying grace,
In the same dear lowly place,

God His manual sign hath set
In the tender violet.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

The Yellow Violet

WHEN beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the blue-bird's warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume
Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mould,
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Pale skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.

Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh.

Oft, in the sunless April day,
Thy early smile has stayed my walk;
But midst the gorgeous blooms of May,
I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they, who climb to wealth, forget
The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them — but I regret
That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour
Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
That made the woods of April bright.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Daisies

THE hills are faint in a cloudy blue,
That loses itself where the sky bends over,
The wind is shaking the orchard thro',
And sending a quiver thro' knee-deep clover.

The air is sweet with a strange perfume,
That comes from the depths of the woodland places,
The hills are hid in a wealth of bloom,
And white with the sweep of the ox-eye daisies!

And farther down, where the brook runs thro',
Where the ferns are cool in the prisoned shadow,
We still may see, thro' the morning dew,
The swell and dip of the daisied meadow.

And then when the wind across it blows,
And the wavering lines of silver follow,
We catch the gleam of her heart of gold,
While over her skims the fleet-winged swallow.

Clear and simple in white and gold,
Meadow blossom of sunlit spaces, —
The field is full as it well can hold,
And white with the drift of the ox-eye daisies!

DORA READ GOODALE.

Columbine

SPRUNG in a cleft of the wayside steep,
And saucily nodding, flushing deep,
With her airy tropic bells aglow, —
Bold and careless, yet formèd light,
And swung into poise on the stormy height,
Like a challenge flung to the world below!

Skirting the rocks at the forest edge
With a running flame from ledge to ledge,
Or swaying deeper in shadowy glooms,
A smouldering fire in her dusky blooms;
Bronzed and moulded by wind and sun,
Maddening, gladdening every one
With a gypsy beauty full and fine, —
A health to the crimson columbine!

ELAINE GOODALE.

Roses

Roses that briefly live,
  Joy is your dower;
Blest be the Fates that give
  One perfect hour.
And, though too soon you die,
  In your dust glows
Something the passer-by
  Knows was a Rose.

Louise Chandler Moulton.

A Yellow Pansy

To the wall of the old green garden
  A butterfly quivering came;
His wings on the sombre lichens
  Played like a yellow flame.

He looked at the gray geraniums,
  And the sleepy four-o'clocks;
He looked at the low lanes bordered
  With the glossy-growing box.

He longed for the peace and the silence,
  And the shadows that lengthened there,
And his wee wild heart was weary
  Of skimming the endless air.

And now in the old green garden, —
  I know not how it came, —
A single pansy is blooming,
  Bright as a yellow flame.

And whenever a gay gust passes,
  It quivers as if with pain,
For the butterfly-soul that is in it
  Longs for the winds again!

HELEN GRAY CONE.

Blue-bell Hollow

THERE'S a fairy in Blue-bell Hollow
Who wakes in the spring of the year
She calls and the children hear,
She calls, and the children follow
Down Blue-bell Hollow.
There the flowers are blue,
And so is the dew
That hangs in their bells,
And the little brook too, —
Half-hidden from view,
Is of just the same hue: —
All done by the spells
Of the fairy who dwells
In Blue-bell Hollow!

EDITH M. THOMAS.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd

(Extract from Elegy on Abraham Lincoln)

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.

* * * * * * *

In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house, near the white-wash'd palings,
Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate, with the perfume strong I love,
With every leaf a miracle — and from this bush in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well, dear brother, I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing, thou would's't surely die).

Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where lately the violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray débris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its shroud in the dark-brown fields uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,
Night and day journeys a coffin.

* * * * * * *

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,

With the lustrous and drooping star, with the countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand nearing the call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands — and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

WALT WHITMAN.

To the Dandelion

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and full of pride, uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth, — thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;
'Tis the spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;
The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:
Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment
In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Blackberry Blossoms

LONG, sunny lane and pike, white, delicate,
The blackberry blossoms are ablow, ablow,
Hiding the rough-hewn rails 'neath drift of snow,
Fresh-fallen, late. The opening pasture gate
Brushes a hundred of them loose, and shakes
Them down into the tall delicious grass:
Sometimes a little sudden wind doth pass,
And all the air is full of flying flakes.
It seems but yesterday they blew as sweet
Down old school ways, and thrilled me with delight;
And reaching out for them, I heard the fleet,
Glad creek go spinning o'er its pebbles bright.
Ah, well! Ah, me! Even now, long as they last,
I am a child again; Joy holds me fast.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

The Golden Rod

O ROD of gold!
O swaying sceptre of the year —
  Now frost and cold
Show Winter near,
And shivering leaves grow brown and sere.
  The bleak hillside,
And marshy waste of yellow reeds,
  And meadows wide
Where frosted weeds
Shake on the damp wind light-winged seeds,
  Are decked with thee, —
The lingering Summer's latest grace,
  And sovereignty.
Each wind-swept space
Waves thy red gold in Winter's face —
  He strives each star,
In stormy pride to lay full low;
  And when thy bar
Resists his blow,
Will crown thee with a puff of snow!

MARGARET DELAND.

Asters and Golden Rod

I KNOW the lands are lit
With all the autumn blaze of Golden Rod;
And everywhere the Purple Asters nod
And bend and wave and flit.

But when the names I hear,
I never picture how their pageant lies
Spread out in tender stateliness of guise,
The fairest of the year.

I only see one nook,
A wooded nook — half sun, half shade —
Where one I love his footsteps sudden stayed,
And whispered, "Darling, look!"

Two oak leaves, vivid green,
Hung low among the ferns, and parted wide;
While purple Aster Stars, close side by side,
Like faces peered between.

Like maiden faces set
In vine-wreathed window, waiting shy and glad
For joys whose dim, mysterious promise had
But promise been, as yet.

And, like proud lovers bent,
In regal courtesy, as kings might woo,
Tall Golden Rods, bareheaded in the dew,
Above the Asters leant.

Ah, me! Lands will be lit
With every autumn's blaze of Golden Rod,
And purple Asters everywhere will nod
And bend and wave and flit;

Until, like ripened seed,
This little earth itself, some noon, shall float
Off into space, a tiny shining mote,
Which none but God will heed;

But never more will be
Sweet Asters peering through that branch of oak
To hear such precious words as dear lips spoke
That sunny day to me.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

Poppies on the Wheat

ALONG Ancona's hills the shimmering heat,
A tropic tide of air with ebb and flow
Bathes all the fields of wheat until they glow
Like flashing seas of green, which toss and beat
Around the vines. The poppies lithe and fleet
Seem running, fiery torchmen, to and fro
To mark the shore.
The farmer does not know
That they are there. He walks with heavy feet,
Counting the bread and wine by autumn's gain,
But I, — I smile to think that days remain
Perhaps to me in which, though bread be sweet
No more, and red wine warm my blood in vain,
I shall be glad remembering how the fleet,
Lithe poppies ran like torchmen with the wheat.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

Wild Plum

OVERHEAD is the hum
Of the wind in the gloom
Of the sentinel pines;
And below the wild plum,
Where the slanting sun shines,
Shows its snowy white bloom,
Flings it subtle perfume
On the breeze
To the bees.

How they hover around,
Tiny bandits and bold,
Making thefts honey-sweet
With a murmurous sound!
And the psyches they meet,
Little atoms of gold,
Join the frolic, and hold
Jubilee
Round the tree.

Where is Mab? Where is Puck?
Is that Ariel sings
From the crest of yon bough
That no mortal should pluck?
O but list to it now! —
Revellings, rapturings; —
Then a glimmer of wings
And away
Like a ray.

How the bloom and the balm
  And the bee and the bird,
    In the depth of the wood,
To the heart bring a calm,
    To the spirit seem good,
  More than music or word!
  Every fibre is stirred
      By the hum, —
      And the plum!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

Fringed Gentian

GOD made a little gentian;
  It tried to be a rose
And failed, and all the summer laughed.
  But just before the snows
There came a purple creature
  That ravished all the hill;
And summer hid her forehead,
  And mockery was still.
The frosts were her condition;
  The Tyrian would not come
Until the North evoked it,
  "Creator! shall I bloom?"

EMILY DICKINSON.

To the Fringed Gentian

THOU blossom bright with autumn dew,
And coloured with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late, and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw nigh to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

The Song of the Chrysanthemum

At last I have come to my throne.
No more, despised and unknown,
In gardens forlorn
My blossoms are born;
No more in some corner obscure
Do I drearily, sadly endure
The withering blight
Of neglect and of slight;
Oh, long have I waited and late,
For this fair and slow-coming fate,
Which the years have foretold
As they sighingly rolled.
Oh, long have I waited and lone;
But at last, on my blossomy throne,
The world doth declare
I am fairest of fair,
And queen of the autumn I reign,
With a sway that none may disdain, —
I, once who did stand,
Despised in the land.

NORA PERRY.

Four-Leaf Clover

I KNOW a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blooms burst with snow,
And down underneath is the loveliest nook,
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,
And one is for love, you know,
And God put another in for luck —
If you search, you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope, and you must have faith,
You must love and be strong — and so —
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

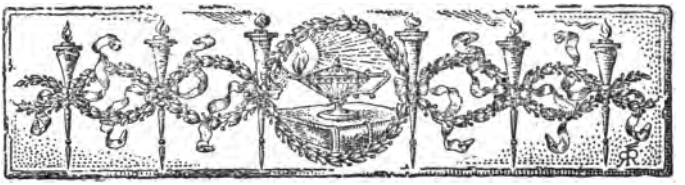
ELLA HIGGINSON.

VI

CALENDAR OF THE SEASONS

The Summer comes and the Summer goes;
Wild-flowers are fringing the dusty lanes,
The swallows go darting through fragrant rains,
Then, all of a sudden — it snows.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH:
"Love's Calendar."



Spring

By woodland paths she came,
  Past leafless vine and tree;
A whisper and a name,
  A smile and melody.

Around her all was mute;
  She, only, knew to sing,
While on the tunéd lute
  She touched the silver string.

Frank Dempster Sherman:
"The Lute of Spring."

March

The stormy March is come at last,
  With wind, and cloud, and changing skies;
I hear the rushing of the blast,
  That through the snowy valley flies.

Ah, passing few are they who speak,
  Wild, stormy month! in praise of thee;
Yet, though thy winds are loud and bleak,
  Thou art a welcome month to me.

For thou, to northern lands, again
  The glad and glorious sun dost bring,
And thou hast joined the gentle train,
  And wear'st the gentle name of Spring.

And, in thy reign of blast and storm,
  Smiles many a long, bright, sunny day,
When the changed winds are soft and warm,
  And heaven puts on the blue of May.

Then sing aloud the gushing rills,
  And the full springs, from frost set free,
That, brightly leaping down the hills,
  Are just set out to meet the sea.

The year's departing beauty hides
  Of wintry storms the sullen threat;
But in thy sternest frown abides
  A look of kindly promise yet.

Thou bring'st the hope of those calm skies,
  And that soft time of sunny showers,
When the wide bloom, on earth that lies,
  Seems of a brighter world than ours.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

The Coming of Spring

ONCE more Spring's dear, remembered thrill
The winter's heart went through —
Out came the willow silverly
And white the shad-bush blew.

A voice went thro' the emerald land
And "Wake, wake, Robin," cried;
A brook burst out in laughter sweet,
And straight the winter sighed.

The gay wild-currant saucily
Came stepping out in red —
A dear, delicious light-o'-love,
With blushes overspread.

A little meadow that I know,
Ran suddenly to gold,
Till every lifted buttercup
Had more than it could hold.

The yellow finches perched and sang
Their few notes sweet and loud,
Or drifted up against the blue —
A bright, melodious cloud.

But oh, but oh, the meadow-lark!
And oh, the song he sang!
All rapture, passion, tenderness
Ached thro' me while it rang.

And as I listening bowed my head
To hide the springing tear,
Lo, all about me — violets!
And Spring herself was here.

ELLA HIGGINSON.

Sonnet

A MONTH ago the cloud alone was fair.
None watched the leafless tree-tops, thin and dry,
Hold up their slender forms against the sky
Save here a poet and a dreamer there.
But now the sun through the soft, golden air
Requires an incense from the flowers that lie
Within a thousand vales; and low and high
The broad earth doth a pale green mantle wear.
Now voices are where all was still before;
By each green leaf there trembles a brown wing;
A thousand small lives wake beside my door
And each one turns to labor and to sing;
At last man feels the tumult of the spring
And looks upon the universe once more.

PHILIP HENRY SAVAGE.

Wood-Notes

(An Excerpt)

'Twas one of the charmed days,
When the genius of God doth flow,
The wind may alter twenty ways,
A tempest cannot blow;
It may blow north, it still is warm;
Or south, it still is clear;
Or east, it smells like a clover-farm;
Or west, no thunder fear.
The musing peasant lowly great
Beside the forest water sate;
The rope-like pine roots crosswise grown,
Composed the network of his throne;
The wide lake, edged with sand and grass,
Was burnished to a floor of glass,
Painted with shadows green and proud
Of the tree and of the cloud.
He was the heart of all the scene;
On him the sun looked more serene;
To hill and cloud his face was known, —
It seemed the likeness of their own;
They knew by secret sympathy
The public child of earth and sky.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Spring Nightfall

APRIL is sad, as if the end she knew.
The maple's misty red, the willow's gold
Face-deep in nimble water, seem to hold
In hope's own weather their autumnal hue.
There is no wind, no star, no sense of dew,
But the thin vapors gird the mountain old,
And the moon, risen before the west is cold,
Pale with compassion slopes into the blue.
Under the shining dark the day hath passed
Shining; so even of thee was home bereaved,
Thou dear and pensive spirit! overcast
Hardly at all, but drawn from light to light,
Who in the doubtful hour, and unperceived,
Rebuked adoring hearts with change and flight.

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY.

Grass

It trembles round me like a sea
  O'er which the south wind softly blows,
Deep green and dense and billowy,
  And odorous with the wild primrose.

From its dim aisles the crickets cry,
  In jocund measure, long and loud,
To swift-winged swallows soaring high
  To gain the opal-hearted cloud.

Deep in its hollows, dusky sweet,
  The bee his honeyed plunder hides;
Above it saffron psyches meet,
  Borne down the air on perfumed tides.

A potent power, subtly strong,
  Controls my senses as I lie;
The morn is eloquent with song,
  And earth seems yearning toward the sky.

My heart is glad with life, and yet
  These emerald spears that gently wave
(Alas! why can I not forget?)
  Will one day nod above my grave!

Clinton Scollard.

The Grass

THE grass so little has to do, —
A sphere of simple green,
With only butterflies to brood,
And bees to entertain,

And stir all day to pretty tunes
The breezes fetch along,
And hold the sunshine in its lap
And bow to everything;

And thread the dews all night, like pearls,
And make itself so fine, —
A duchess were too common
For such a noticing.

And even when it dies, to pass
In odors so divine,
As lowly spices gone to sleep,
Or amulets of pine.

And then to dwell in sovereign barns,
And dream the days away, —
The grass so little has to do,
I wish I were the hay!

EMILY DICKINSON.

Apple-Blossom Time

THE sky is rich in shimmering sheen
Of deep, delicious blue;
The earth is freshly, softly green,
Of one translucent hue;
The choir of birds in wood and field
Ring out a happy chime;
The trees their fairest foliage yield
In apple-blossom time.

The orchard rows are all ablush,
The meadows all aglow;
On every bough a vivid flush,
A drift of petalled snow;
The clustered bloom, with faint perfume,
Wreathes many a garland fine,
And many a rosy, nodding plume
In apple-blossom time.

The fulness of our early dreams,
Tho' fresh and pure and sweet
When the glad earth with beauty teems,
Soon trembles to our feet;
Richer, tho' rarer, comes the fruit,
To crown a golden prime,
Fulfilling pledges proffered us
In apple-blossom time.

ELAINE GOODALE.

Summer

ABOVE the trees the honey-bees swarm by with buzz and boom,
And in the field and garden a thousand blossoms bloom,
Within the farmer's meadow a brown-eyed daisy blows,
And down at the edge of the hollow a red and thorny rose.
But Polly! — Polly! — The cows are in the corn!
"Oh, where's Polly?"

RICHARD WATSON GILDER:
"A Midsummer Song."

Summer

HIGH on the crest of the blossoming grasses,
Bending and swaying with face toward the sky,
Stirred by the lightest west wind as it passes,
Hosts of the silver-white daïsy-stars lie!

I, looking up through the mists of the flowers,
I, lying low on the earth thrilled with June,
Give not a thought to the vanishing hours,
Save that they melt into twilight too soon!

Blossoms of peaches float down for my cover, —
Snow-flakes that blushed to be kissed by the sun, —
Blossoms of apples drift over and over, —
White they with grief that their short day is done!

Buttercup's lanterns are lighted about me,
  Burly red clover's warm cheek presses mine;
Powdery Bee never once seems to doubt me,
  Tipping each chalice for Summer's new wine!

Tiny white butterflies ("Brides" children name them)
  Flicker and glimmer, and turn in their flight;
Surely the sunshine suffices to tame them,
  Close to my hand they will swing, and alight!

Small timid breezes, than butterflies shyer,
  Just for a moment soft buffet my face,
Then fly away to the tree-tops and higher,
  Shaking down shadows o'er every bright space.

MARGARET DELAND.

When June is Here

WHEN June is here — what art have we to sing
The whiteness of the lilies midst the green
Of noon-tranced lawns? Or flash of roses seen
Like red-birds' wings? Or earliest ripening
Prince-Harvest apples, where the cloyed bees cling
Round winey juices oozing down between
The peckings of the robin, while we lean
In under-grasses, lost in marveling.
Or the cool term of morning, and the stir
Of odorous breaths from wood and meadow walks;
The bobwhite's liquid yodel, and the whir
Of sudden flight; and, where the milkmaid talks
Across the bars, on tilted barley-stalks
The dewdrops' glint in webs of gossamer.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

June

JUNE in the grass!
Daisies and buttercups, lo, they surpass
Coined gold of kings; and for greendom, the rose,
Bloom of the month, see how stately she goes;
Blow, winds, and waft me the breathings of flowers:
June's in her bowers.

June overhead!
All the birds know it, for swift they have sped
Northward, and now they are singing like mad;
June is full-tide for them, June makes them glad.
Hark, the bright choruses greeting the day —
Sorrow, away!

June in the heart!
Dormant dim dreamings awake and upstart,
Blood courses quicker, some sprite in my feet
Makes rhythm of motion, makes wayfaring sweet;
So, outward or inward, the meaning is clear;
Summer is here.

RICHARD BURTON.

The Vision of Sir Launfal

(An Excerpt)

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest, —
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

James Russell Lowell.

Summer's Sounds

ONE listening, in the clover fields can hear
The mower whet his scythe; and far away,
O'er lowlands odorous with the new-mown hay,
The rattle of the reaper sharp and clear.
Across the reedy stretches of the mere
The grazing horses send their greeting neigh;
While, 'mid the silences throughout the day,
The locust's sharp staccato stabs the ear.
Dim shimmering in the heat the violet hills
Call to us vaguely from a realm of dreams,
And from the meadow's smooth meandering streams,
Come muffled murmurs of the distant mills;
From upland wheat-fields, as his barns he fills,
We hear the farmer, calling to his teams.

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

August

THE white sky and the white sea run
Their twin pearl-splendors into one,
  Nor can the eye distinguish these,
  Enchanted by the diableries
The mist-witch conjures in the sun.
Landward a white birch, like a nun,
  Whispers her leafy rosaries.
  Beyond, where the still woodland is,
The blue west leadens into dun,
  Close to the dark tops of the trees.

RICHARD HOVEY.

A Dream of Summer

BLAND as the morning breath of June
The southwest breezes play;
And, through its haze, the winter noon
Seems warm as summer's day.
The snow-plumed Angel of the North
Has dropped his icy spear;
Again the mossy earth looks forth,
Again the streams gush clear.

The fox his hill-side cell forsakes,
The muskrat leaves his nook,
The bluebird in the meadow brakes
Is singing with the brook.
"Bear up, oh mother Nature!" cry
Bird, breeze, and streamlet free;
"Our winter voices prophesy
Of summer days to thee!"

So, in these winters of the soul,
By bitter blasts and drear
O'erswept from Memory's frozen pole,
Will sunny days appear.
Reviving Hope and Faith, they show
The soul its living powers,
And how beneath the winter's snow
Lie germs of summer flowers!

The Night is mother of the Day,
  The Winter of the Spring,
And ever upon old Decay
  The greenest mosses cling.
Behind the cloud the star-light lurks,
  Through showers the sunbeams fall;
For God, who loveth all His works,
  Has left His Hope with all!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

The Blackberry Farm

NATURE gives with freëst hands
Richest gifts to poorest lands.
When the lord has sown his last
And his field's to desert passed,
She begins to claim her own,
And — instead of harvests flown,
Sunburnt sheaves and golden ears
Sends her hardier pioneers:
Barbarous brambles, outlawed seeds,
The first families of weeds
Fearing neither sun nor wind,
With the flowers of their kind
(Outcasts of the garden-bound)
Colonize the expended ground,
Using (none her right gainsay)
Confiscations of decay: —
Thus she clothes the barren place,
Old disgrace, with newer grace.
Title-deeds, which cover lands
Ruled and reaped by buried hands,
She — disowning owners old,
Scorning their "to have and hold" —
Takes herself; the moldering fence,
Hides with her munificence;
O'er the crumbled gatepost twines
Her proprietary vines;
On the doorstep of the house
Writes in moss "Anonymous,"

And, that beast and bird may see,
"This is Public property;"
To the bramble makes the sun
Bearer of profusion:
Blossom-odors breathe in June
Promise of her later boon,
And in August's brazen heat
Grows the prophecy complete;—
Lo, her largess glistens bright,
Blackness diamonded with light!
Then, behold, she welcomes all
To her annual festival:
"Mine the fruit but yours as well,"
Speaks the Mother Miracle;
"Rich and poor are welcome; come,
Make to-day millennium
In my garden of the sun:
Black and white to me are one.
This my freehold use content—
Here no landlord rides for rent;
I proclaim my jubilee,
In my Black Republic, free.
Come," she beckons; "enter, through
Gates of gossamer, doors of dew
(Lit with Summer's tropic fire),
My Liberia of the brier."

JOHN JAMES PIATT.

Autumn

'Tis said, in death, upon the face
Of Age, a momentary trace
Of Infancy's returning grace
Forestalls decay;

And here, in Autumn's dusky reign,
A birth of blossom seems again
To flush the woodland's fading train
With dreams of May.

JOHN B. TABB:
"Indian Summer."

A Dream of Autumn

MELLOW hazes, lowly trailing
Over wood and meadow, veiling
Sombre skies, with wildfowl sailing
Sailor-like to foreign lands;
And the north-wind overleaping
Summer's brink, and floodlike sweeping
Wrecks of roses where the weeping
Willows wring their helpless hands.

Flared, like Titan torches flinging
Flakes of flame and ember, springing
From the vale the trees stand swinging
In the moaning atmosphere;

While in dead'ning-lands the lowing
Of the cattle, sadder growing,
Fills the sense to overflowing
With the sorrow of the year.

Sorrowfully, yet the sweeter
Sings the brook in rippled metre
Under boughs that lithely teeter
Lorn birds, answering from the shores
Through the viny, shady-shiny
Interspaces, shot with tiny
Flying motes that fleck the winy
Wave-engraven sycamores.

Fields of ragged stubble, wrangled
With rank weeds, and shocks of tangled
Corn, with crests like rent plumes dangled
Over Harvest's battle-plain;
And the sudden whir and whistle
Of the quail that, like a missile,
Whizzes over thorn and thistle,
And, a missile, drops again.

Muffled voices, hid in thickets
Where the redbird stops to stick its
Ruddy beak betwixt the pickets
Of the truant's rustic trap;
And the sound of laughter ringing
Where, within the wild-vine swinging,
Climb Bacchante's schoolmates, flinging
Purple clusters in her lap.

Rich as wine, the sunset flashes
Round the titled world, and dashes
Up the sloping west and splashes
  Red foam over sky and sea —
Till my dream of Autumn, paling
In the splendor all-prevailing,
Like a sallow leaf goes sailing
  Down the silence solemnly.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

September

SIR GOLDENROD stands by and grieves
When Queen September goeth by:
Her viewless feet disturb the leaves,
And with her south the thrushes fly,
Or loiter 'mid the rustling sheaves,
And search and fail, and wonder why.
The burgher cat-tails stiffly bow
Beside the marsh. The asters cast
Their purple coronets, and below
The brown ferns shiver in the blast,
And all the fretted pool aglow
Repeats the cold, clear, yellow sky.
The dear, loved summer days are past,
And tranquil goes the Queen to die.

S. WEIR MITCHELL.

A Song of Early Autumn

WHEN late in the summer the streams run yellow,
Burst the bridges and spread into bays;
When berries are black and peaches are mellow,
And hills are hidden by rainy haze;

When the goldenrod is golden still,
But the heart of the sunflower is darker and sadder;
When the corn is in stacks on the slope of the hill,
And slides o'er the path the stripéd adder.

When butterflies flutter from clover to thicket,
Or wave their wings on the drooping leaf;
When the breeze comes shrill with the call of the cricket,
Grasshoppers' rasp and rustle of sheaf.

When high in the field the fern-leaves wrinkle,
And brown is the grass where the mowers have mown;
When low in the meadow the cow-bells tinkle,
And small brooks crinkle o'er stock and stone.

When heavy and hollow the robin's whistle
And shadows are deep in the heat of noon;
When the air is white with the down o' the thistle,
And the sky is red with the harvest moon;

Oh, then be chary, young Robert and Mary,
No time let slip, not a moment wait!
If the fiddle would play it must stop its tuning,
And they who would wed must be done with their mooning;
Let the churn rattle, see well to the cattle,
And pile the wood by the barn-yard gate!

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

Autumn Song

No clouds are in the morning sky,
The vapors hug the stream, —
Who says that life and love can die
In all this northern gleam?
At every turn the maples burn,
The quail is whistling free,
The partridge whirs, and the frosted burrs
Are dropping for you and me.
Ho! hilly ho! heigh O!
Hilly ho!
In the clear October morning.

Along our path the woods are bold,
And glow with ripe desire;
The yellow chestnut showers its gold,
The sumachs spread their fire;
The breezes feel as crisp as steel,
The buckwheat tops are red:
Then down the lane, love, scurry again,
And over the stubble tread!
Ho! hilly ho! heigh O!
Hilly ho!
In the clear October morning.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

An Indian-Summer Reverie

(An Excerpt)

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar-shadows
  Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the ploughman's call
Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed meadows;
  The single crow a single caw lets fall;
And all around me every bush and tree
Says Autumn's here, and Winter soon will be,
  Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

The birch, most shy and lady-like of trees,
  Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,
And hints at her foregone gentilities
  With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves;
The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,
Glares red as blood across the sinking sun,
  As one who proudlier to a falling fortune cleaves.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapt,
  Who, 'mid some council of the sad-garbed whites,
Erect and stern, in his own memories lapt,
  With distant eye broods over other sights,
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare replace,
The wounded turf heal o'er the railway's trace,
  And roams the savage Past of his undwindled rights.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all for lost,
And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and dry,
After the first betrayal of the frost,
Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky;
The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid gold,
To the faint Summer, beggared now and old,
Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her favoring eye.

The ash her purple drops forgivingly
And sadly, breaking not the general hush;
The maple-swamps glow like a sunset sea,
Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush;
All round the wood's edge creeps the skirting blaze
Of bushes low, as when, on cloudy days,
Ere the rain falls, the cautious farmer burns his brush.

O'er yon low wall, which guards one unkempt zone,
Where vines, and weeds, and scrub-oaks intertwine
Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone
Is massed to one soft gray by lichens fine,
The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed, weaves
A prickly network of ensanguined leaves;
Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alders shine.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

The Ranger

(An Excerpt)

Nowhere fairer, sweeter, rarer,
Does the golden-locked fruit-bearer
  Through his painted woodland stray,
Than where hill-side oaks and beeches
Overlook the long, blue reaches,
Silver coves, and pebbled beaches,
  And green isles of Casco Bay;
  Nowhere day, for delay,
With a tenderer look beseeches,
  "Let me with my charmed earth stay."

On the grain-lands of the mainlands
Stands the serried corn like train-bands,
  Plume and pennon rustling gay;
Out at sea, the islands wooded,
Silver birches, golden-hooded,
Set with maples, crimson-blooded,
  White sea-foam and sand-hills gray,
  Stretch away, far away.
Dim and dreamy, over-brooded
  By the hazy autumn day.

Gayly chattering to the clattering
Of the brown nuts downward pattering,
    Leap the squirrels, red and gray.
On the grass-land, on the fallow,

Drop the apples, red and yellow,
Drop the russet pears and mellow,
  Drop the red leaves all the day.
  And away, swift away,
Sun and cloud, o'er hill and hollow
  Chasing, weave their web of play.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

In October

OCTOBER morning! How the sun
  Glitters on glowing shock and sheaf,
On apple crisp with mellow gold,
  On wonder-painted leaf!
October evening! Look, the moon,
  Like one in faëry lands benighted!
Frost out-of-doors bites sharp; within,
  Good, our first fire is lighted!

JOHN JAMES PIATT.

In Apple Time

THE apple harvest days are here,
The boding apple harvest days,
And down the flaming valley ways
The foresters of time draw near.

Through leagues of bloom I went with Spring,
To call you on the slopes of morn,
Where in imperious song is born
The wild heart of the goldenwing.

I roved through alien summer lands,
I sought your beauty near and far;
To-day, where russet shadows are,
I hold your face between my hands.

On runnels dark, by slopes of fern,
The hazy undern sleeps in sun;
Remembrance and desire, undone,
From old regret to dreams return.

The apple harvest time is here,
The tender apple harvest time;
A sheltering calm, unknown at prime,
Settles upon the brooding year.

BLISS CARMAN.

Apple-Gathering

THE beautiful apples, so golden and mellow
They will fall at a kiss of the breeze,
While it breathes through the foliage frosty and yellow
And the sunshine is filling the trees!
Though high in the light wind they gladly would linger
On the boughs where their blossoms were found,
Yet they drop at a breath, at the touch of a finger
They shatter their cores on the ground!

Through the morn of October while Autumn is trying
With all things to make-believe Spring,
How the leaves of the orchard around us are flying! —
The heavens with jubilee ring!
The ladders in breezes of sunshine are swinging,
The farmer-boys gladden and climb:
To gather the fruit they are swaying and singing —
Glad hearts to glad voices keep time!

Far down the bright air they are happy to listen
To the noise of the mill and the flail,
And the waters that laugh as they leap and they glisten
From the dam that is lighting the vale! —
The wild flutter of bells that so drearily rises
From glades where the cows wander slow,
And the laughter of faces in childish surprises
When the wind flings an apple below!

Oh, see! in the trees that are drinking the splendor,
How the gladness of boyhood is seen! —
How they shake all the branches so windy and slender,
And a quick golden rain is between!
High and higher they climb, till the grasses are cover'd
With the fruits that were sweet April flowers,
And the yellowing leaves that all over them hover'd
Flutter down with the apples in showers!

The harvests are garner'd, the meadows are burning,
At sunset, in golden and brown;
The apples are gather'd, the wagons returning:
The Winter may bluster and frown!
The blind-drifting snows may make barren the even,
Dark twilights may shiver with rain;
But the apples and cider by Summer are given —
Give Winter to Summer again!

JOHN JAMES PIATT.

Autumn

WITH what a glory comes and goes the year!
The buds of spring, those beautiful harbingers
Of sunny skies and cloudless times, enjoy
Life's newness, and earth's garniture spread out
And when the silver habit of the clouds
Comes down upon the autumn sun, and with
A sober gladness the old year takes up
His bright inheritance of golden fruits,
A pomp and pageant fill the splendid scene.

There is a beautiful spirit breathing now
Its mellowed richness on the clustered trees,
And, from a beaker full of richest dyes,
Pouring new glory on the autumn woods,
And dipping in warm light the pillared clouds.
Morn on the mountain, like a summer bird,
Lifts up her purple wing, and in the vales
The gentle wind, a sweet and passionate wooer,
Kisses the blushing leaf, and stirs up life
Within the solemn woods of ash deep-crimsoned,
And silver beech, and maple yellow-leaved,
Where Autumn, like a faint old man, sits down
By the wayside a-weary. Through the trees
The golden robin moves. The purple finch,
That on wild cherry and red cedar feeds,
A winter bird, comes with his plaintive whistle,
And pecks by the witch-hazel, whilst aloud
From cottage roofs the warbling blue-bird sings,

And, merrily, with oft-repeated stroke,
Sounds from the threshing-floor the busy flail.

O what a glory doth this world put on
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent!
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
To his long resting-place without a tear.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

Amid the Wheat

Amid the wheat, amid the wheat,
At morn the sturdy gleaners greet,
What time the meadow-lark upsprings
On buoyant wings and soars and sings.
The reapers whet their scythes in tune
Till dies the sunlit afternoon,
Then homeward thread the laneways through
Where grasses gleam with shimmering dew,
While birds their vesper songs repeat,
Amid the wheat, amid the wheat.

Amid the wheat, amid the wheat,
The poppies find a shy retreat;
With every breeze that blows is blent
Their aromatic drowsy scent
That wafts the weary soul away
Across some wide aërial bay
Where shoreless realms of dreamland lie
Beneath an iridescent sky:
Such vistas ope to those who meet
Amid the wheat, amid the wheat.

Amid the wheat, amid the wheat,
Who strays with frolic-loving feet?
A little maid that comes to see
Where dwells the braggart bumble-bee;

A little maid of summers few
With laughing eyes of pansy hue,
Whose heart is like a morn in May,
Whose life an endless holiday;
Ah, may it ever seem as sweet
As now to her amid the wheat!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

Winter

WHEN February sun shines cold
There comes a day when in the air
The wings of winter slow unfold
And show the golden summer there.

PHILIP H. SAVAGE:
"Shorter Poems," VII.

The Frost Spirit

HE comes — he comes — the Frost Spirit comes! — You
may trace his footsteps now
On the naked woods and the blasted fields and the brown
hill's withered brow.
He has smitten the leaves of the grey old trees where
their pleasant green came forth,
And the winds, which follow wherever he goes, have
shaken them down to earth.

He comes — he comes — the Frost Spirit comes! — from
the frozen Labrador —
From the icy bridge of the Northern Seas, which the
white bear wanders o'er,
Where the fisherman's sail is stiff with ice, and the luck-
less forms below
In the sunless cold of the lingering night into marble
statues grow!

He comes — he comes — the Frost Spirit comes! — on the rushing Northern blast,
And the dark Norwegian pines have bowed as his fearful breath went past.
With an unscorched wing he has hurried on, where the fires of Hecla glow
On the darkly beautiful sky above and the ancient ice below.

He comes — he comes — the Frost Spirit comes! — and the quiet lake shall feel
The torpid touch of his glazing breath, and ring to the skater's heel;
And the streams which danced on the broken rocks, or sang to the leaning grass,
Shall bow again to their winter chain, and in mournful silence pass.

He comes — he comes — the Frost Spirit comes! — let us meet him as we may,
And turn with the light of the parlor-fire his evil power away;
And gather closer the circle round, when that fire-light dances high,
And laugh at the shriek of the baffled Fiend as his sounding wing goes by!

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

January

SAY it, my Winds, — was never king but me!
Say it, and say the king is on his throne,
His lords about him. Rouse, lords, you, mine own,
Up, great of heart! your king — a king is he —
Would take his topmost hour of royalty.
Ho, Winds, stick sharper, prick 'em to the bone,
Yon oak, there, wrench him, fetch a louder groan. —
Bow, bow, old bald-top, bend the creaking knee. —
Rake, strip the hills; smite harder, Winds, by half;
Drive, Cold, clear to men's hearts, set down your sting
In men. Lords, come, a hollowful we quaff,
Then for a roaring stave; hey, drink and sing,
The world's last window, rack it with your laugh:
Ha, ha, but it is good to be a king!

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

A Winter Piece

(An Excerpt)

But Winter has yet brighter scenes, — he boasts
Splendours beyond what gorgeous Summer knows;
Or Autumn with his many fruits, and woods
All flushed with many hues. Come when the rains
Have glazed the snow, and clothed the trees with ice;
While the slant sun of February pours
Into the bowers a flood of light. Approach!
The incrusted surface shall upbear thy steps,
And the broad arching portals of the grove
Welcome thy entering. Look! the massy trunks
Are cased in the pure crystal; each light spray,
Nodding and tinkling in the breath of heaven,
Is studded with its trembling water-drops,
That stream with rainbow radiance as they move.
But round the parent stem the long low boughs
Bend, in a glittering ring, and arbours hide
The glassy floor.

* * * * * * *

And it is pleasant when the noisy streams
Are just set free, and milder suns melt off
The plashy snow, save only the firm drift
In the deep glen or the close shade of pines, —
'Tis pleasant to behold the wreaths of smoke
Roll up among the maples of the hill,
Where the shrill sound of youthful voices wakes
The shriller echo, as the clear pure lymph,

That from the wounded trees, in twinkling drops,
Falls, mid the golden brightness of the morn,
Is gathered in with brimming pails, and oft,
Wielded by sturdy hands, the stroke of axe
Makes the woods ring. Along the quiet air,
Come and float calmly off the soft light clouds,
Such as you see in summer, and the winds
Scarce stir the branches. Lodged in sunny clefts
Where the cold breezes come not, blooms alone
The little wind-flower, whose just-opened eye
Is blue as the spring heaven it gazes at —
Startling the loiterer in the naked groves
With unexpected beauty, for the time
Of blossoms and green leaves is yet afar.
And ere it comes, the encountering winds shall oft
Muster their wrath again, and rapid clouds
Shade heaven, and bounding on the frozen earth
Shall fall their volleyed stores rounded like hail,
And white like snow, and the loud North again
Shall buffet the vexed forest in his rage.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Woods in Winter

WHEN winter winds are piercing chill,
And through the hawthorn blows the gale,
With solemn feet I tread the hill,
That overbrows the lonely vale.

O'er the bare upland, and away,
Through the long reach of desert woods,
The embracing sunbeams chastely play,
And gladden these deep solitudes.

Where, twisted round the barren oak,
The summer vine in beauty clung,
And summer winds the stillness broke,
The crystal icicle is hung.

Where, from their frozen urns, mute springs
Pour out the river's gradual tide,
Shrilly the skaters' iron rings,
And voices fill the woodland side.

Alas! how changed from the fair scene,
When birds sang out their mellow lay,
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day.

But still wild music is abroad,
Pale, desert woods! within your crowd;
And gathering winds, in hoarse accord,
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chill airs and wintry winds! My ear
  Has grown familiar with your song;
I hear it in the opening year, —
  I listen, and it cheers me long.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

In February

THERE's not a glimmer of sun in the sullen sky,
Where the mountainous clouds drive on as the day declines,
And the wind, like a beast at bay that roars and whines,
To the riotous waves of the ocean makes reply.

The snowflakes flutter and whirl through the icy air,
The rustling leaves to the spectral oak boughs cling;
The fields that will bourgeon and break, 'neath the breath of spring,
Into billows of bloom, are shrivelled and wan and bare.

The hills are white, and the river makes no sound;
Not a song upwells from the wood, and the eaves are dumb;
While the hardy sparrow, in search of a scanty crumb,
Hops about o'er the treacherous frozen ground.

We long for the green and white on the orchard spray,
For the rustle of grass and the cricket shrilling low,
And yet we can wait, for under the rime we know
Is the living heart that will quicken again in May.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

February Night

BELOW, the sea lies blue and cold as steel,
And smooth as satin stretched from shore to shore,
Save where a shimmering fish leaps; or an oar
Reeking with crimson rises; or the keel
Of some ship lets a rough path backward reel;
The sun — a flaming thing — sinks low and lower
And beats upon the West's unclosing door;
The shadows downward creep and reach to feel,
With long black fingers, if the day be dead;
Above, the sky glows like a pearl alight
With a rose-diamond's shifting gold and red;
And o'er the eastern mountains, soft and white,
The moon steps, trembling, from her silver bed —
A virgin bride — to meet the lips of night.

ELLA HIGGINSON.

The Vision of Sir Launfal

(EXCERPT FROM PART II)

DOWN swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;
The little brook heard it and built a roof,
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
All night by the white star's frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief,
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops,
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,

That crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one:
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice;
'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each flitting shadow of earth and sky,
  Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
  By the elfin builders of the frost.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

Winter's Here Indeed

THE summer's skiffs that lined the shore
Are laid upon the snowy banks
  With many a useless oar.
Where silver minnows played their pranks
By arrow-headed weeds in ranks
Along the marge, they play no more, —
  For Winter's here indeed!

The shifting shadow from the bough
No longer delicately weaves
  Upon the wading cow
The dappled semblance of the leaves;
The ferry-flat, uppiled with sheaves
From island harvests, comes not now, —
  For Winter's here indeed!

And, oh, the plumy islands dim,
So purple and so azure fair,
  That seemed almost to swim
Within the amethystine air —
Like spirits, free from every care —
From river's tranquil rim to rim,
  Ere Winter came indeed!

And have they, then, their mooring lost?
Slipped anchor here, and sailed away
  To some more sunny coast?
To some far-off Floridian bay,
Where balmy airs around them play?
Or buried are they by the frost,
  Since Winter's here indeed?

The wild ducks floating by in flocks;
The flying geese with phantom scream;
  The heron on the rocks;
The halcyon, darting down the stream,—
All, all, are vanished as a dream,—
For ice the darling river blocks,
  Since Winter's here indeed.

O April with thy violet eyes,
Come walking down the willowy shores,
  And take us by surprise!
And burst to leaf the sycamores,
And calm the river where it roars,
And herd thy white flocks in the skies,
  For Winter's here indeed!

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

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